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LECTURES

ON THE ART OF

ENGRAVING,

DELIVERED AT THE

ROYAL INSTITUTION

OF

GREAT BRITAIN,

By JOHN LANDSEER,

ENGRAVER TO THE KING, AND F. S. A.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

HAVING long since been led to perceive that Engraving did not hold its due rank and consideration among the fine Arts, and that the public did not derive from it the degree either of pleasure or advantage which it was capable of imparting, I had formed a wish that it might become more highly and more extensively useful; and had felt the desire, which is almost inseparable from such a wish, of being myself instrumental in the accomplishment of what appeared to me so laudable a purpose.

That the most commercial country in the world might, by promoting the improvement, become the chief seat and seminary of the most commercial of the arts of embellishment, was a wish in which I might naturally expect every subject of these kingdoms to join; and to the principle of which, I conceived not a philosopher in Europe could object.

I trust that, if I should be accused, I shall eventually be acquitted of any over-weening fondness for an art which it is my good or ill fortune to profess, when I state that I beheld Engraving, which ought to flourish here as in its peculiar soil, as a neglected and declining Art. It was, to my observation, a wild, forlorn, and unregarded Tree; the fruit of which few had tasted, or aspired to reach; but those few agreed in acknowledging the richness of its flavour: if others could be induced to partake of its productions, a reasonable hope might be entertained that its cultivation would become an object of public attention.

Of beautiful or interesting objects of sight, it is the blessed prerogative that their value is not diminished, but enhanced, by being imparted to others. The solitary, or even the restricted, enjoyment of this kind of pleasure, is a species of destitution: nor will it be esteemed any unwarrantable presumption on my part, to desire to be admitted among that class of the good, or the happy, or the luxurious, who are most charmed with reverberated enjoyment. On the present occasion, both reason and sentiment united to persuade me that this species of pleasure is as referable to ascertainable principles, as

h at arising from the productions of any other Art which is at once an object of the eye and of the mind: or, in other words, that it might, with the same probability of successful explication, be subjected to analytical research; and the results be rendered obvious to others.

I had for some time past, meditated a *Book* on the subject: and had only been deterred from writing one by the difficulties of writing such a book as might, by not offending the more critical literary Taste of the public, effect the purpose I had in view; and by the consciousness that my previous education and habits of study had not been of a nature to qualify me for such an undertaking. I had not however abandoned the idea—I even flattered myself that, in the few hours I could possibly steal from sleep; from the cares inseparable from the education of a numerous family; and from a profession, to excel in which demands unremitting application; I had made some progress toward qualifying myself for the task.

My wishes, intentions, and means of accomplishment, being in this state, I need scarcely inform the reader that it afforded me the most lively pleasure when I perceived that the Royal

Institution was extending its views toward the fine Arts. It immediately occurred that the opportunity of lecturing there would be a more eligible mode than that of printing, of addressing the public: not only because the opinions and principles which I might have the honour to state would be supported by the engraved examples which I should at the same time exhibit, and my sentiments by these means be more clearly and powerfully conveyed; but also because, thus supported, and where the attention of my audience would be so much more attracted towards thoughts and things than toward words, I believed I might venture to read what it would have required, without such auxiliary aid, more confidence to print. With this latter feeling I am at length compelled, by the machinations of certain individuals, to compromise.

To deprecate candid, or to anticipate malignant, criticism (except from those few who have already shewn themselves inimical to my principles) would be both unwise and unjust. In the close of the short exordium prefixed to the first of the following discourses, I have given some reasons why I do not expect even severe criticism. Yet I would not affect to conceal, what I cannot repress, that I feel the full influence of the anxiety

that attends a first appearance (in a new character) before a tribunal which I have always respected. That mixed feeling which I have already experienced in the Lecture-Room I must again encounter, but under more trying circumstances, and again be content to hope humbly for the result.

To those who may expect further apology from an Engraver—a mere earthly guest—for having presumed into the Heaven of literature without the passport of a classical education, I may be permitted to state, that the following Discourses have been listened to, with a degree of approbation highly gratifying to their author, by an intelligent and discriminating part of the public: and finally, I may be allowed to appeal to that general sentiment of indulgent candour which,—provided he be right with regard to those truths of his art, which he undertakes to communicate, and his language sufficiently explicit for the purpose,—is satisfied to dispense with those elegancies of literature from an Artist, which it is the pleasure, the business, and the pride, of the Scholar to acquire and display.

Sir Francis Bacon recommends histories of Art, upon the principle of their blending the

attractions of entertainment with the more solid advantages of real utility: Dr. Burney has observed that, "collecting into one view the progress of an art, seems likely to enlarge the knowledge, and stimulate the emulation, of its professors; who may, by this means, be taken out of the beaten track of habit and common practice to which their ideas are usually confined:" and Sir James Mac Intosh (whose sincerity here, will not be distrusted,) says he has "long been convinced that public Lectures, which have been used in most ages and countries to teach the elements of almost every part of learning, are the most convenient mode in which these elements can be taught; that they are the best adapted for the important purposes of awakening the attention of the student, of abridging his labours, of guiding his enquiries, of relieving the tediousness of private study, and of impressing principle on his recollection." May I venture to add to this excellent reasoning on the subject, that by such means the public taste is most likely to be preserved free, or be emancipated, from the thraldom of Fashion; and to be led to perceive that rules of criticism, as well as the practice of professional artists, are expansive in their nature, and alike liable to become corrupt from stagnation.

Of the Art of Engraving, I believe there is no regular history extant in any language; and, what may seem still more extraordinary, no precepts of criticism that are founded on any thing like principle. Painting, Poetry, Music—almost every other art, may boast its historians and critics: but with respect to Engraving, facts have passed unrecorded; principle has been allowed to flit from our observation; and taste has been driven to wander, and is still wandering, through the palpable obscure, with scarcely a gleam of elementary light to assist its progress. Perhaps the fate of no art whatever, exhibits a more complete verification of the celebrated aphorism* of Hippocrates, than that of Engraving: certainly in no art has opportunity been less successfully seized; nor experience less facilitated judgment or promoted improvement.

It is to be regretted, that of the numerous histories of Arts penned by the ancients, very few have descended to us;† and the more so as

* "Art is long, life is short, opportunity is fleeting, experience is fallacious, and judgment difficult."

† The Treatise of Vitruvius on Architecture, Pliny's Natural History, and Plutarch's Dialogue on Music, are, I believe, nearly all that survive: though, as Dr. Burney, on the authority of Fabricius, informs us, the list of Greek writers on the Art of Music alone, amounts to nearly thirty.

these are the most estimable, because the most useful, kind of history; and that kind in which truth is the least likely to be disguised. In losing these classical records, we have probably lost some valuable information respecting the ancient modes of Engraving. The verbal communications of Sir Henry Englefield, and Mr. Douce; the printed researches of Raspe, Hayley, Pinkerton, Strutt, and various other authors; and my own reflections on those communications and researches, have enabled me to attempt in some small degree to supply the deficiency which this loss has occasioned. I should hope that these reasons would at once plead my inducement for having written so much on *ancient* Engraving, and my apology for having written no more.

The part of my design which succeeded this in the execution, and which I intended to have protracted to a much greater length, may, perhaps, seem more arduous: but to travel through the provinces of *modern* Engraving in search of principle; and to reap, to glean, or to root out, as my judgment might direct, and my strength accomplish; has been to me, as far as I have yet proceeded, the pleasantest part of my journey.

In defining and explaining the several species of Engraving to which the ingenuity of the last

three hundred and fifty years has given birth, I felt it to be indispensable to a conscientious performance of the duties of a public lecturer, not to pass without notice, the frauds upon the public taste, as well as upon the purses of individuals, of which some of these had become the vehicles; to endeavour to repel by honest exposure those erroneous principles of criticism (or rather those vague and unfounded notions which occupy the place of principles) which empirical pretenders to Art have but too successfully promoted; and to treat of the causes which have conspired to retard the progress of British engraving.

I endeavoured to do this with as much delicacy, with as little reference and as little offence to particular individuals, as might be consistent with manliness of motive and the just claims of Art. I request the impartial reader to reflect, whether to dissemble truth; or to temporise with error or fraud and call it prudence, was the course for me to steer? whether there be any honest and practicable middle course between this and the more direct course which I have pursued? and whether, to him who has objects in view so important as the improvement of public taste and the advancement of Art,

particular persons and past transactions can or ought to be otherwise regarded than as those alphabetic characters, by means of which the writer aims at imparting truth to those who honour him with their attention.

The Royal Institution has been to the hopes I had formed for the Art of Engraving, what Ferdinand and Isabella were to those of Columbus. It has enabled me to perform a first Voyage: and (if I might presume to say so) like that great man I have already lived to hear the *compliments* (which could not be very *flattering)* of those who not long since expressed, "but with no friendly voice," their surprise at the supposed temerity of my undertaking. Whether that Institution, managed and influenced as it has lately been, resembled those illustrious Spaniards in any other less gracious respect, the reader who continues to favour me with his attentive perusal, shall be enabled to judge.

By the gentleman who acquainted me that it was his department to treat with the Lecturers, I was desired to make my Discourses eloquent and entertaining; and was, beside, informed that it was an object with the Managers to convert the

frivolous part of the metropolis into something better.

To both these objects, though they are not in perfect accordance, I endeavoured to pay due attention.—Considering the former more as the letter, and the latter rather as the spirit, of my instructions, my constant endeavour in composing the Lectures, has been to make them really *useful*; and to regard entertainment, and the blandishments of style, as inferior considerations. It was in aiming at this primary object of PUBLIC UTILITY, and because we have no critical review of works of Art and their conductors, (as we have of Literature, Music, and the Drama) that I had conceived it to be an indispensable part of my duty to set the public on its guard against those passing impositions that are practised by means of engraving. Driven as I am, by the time and manner of my dismissal from the Lecture-room, to vindicate my past conduct, I may be allowed to say that, in attending to this irksome part of my task, I did not forget, but was content to sacrifice, the pecuniary advantages which, as an Engraver, I might have obtained in promoting schemes which I could not regard as consistent with the true aims and ends of the Art: accordingly, in performing this part of my voyage, I deliberately took the rudder from the hand of Interest,

where, in these mercantile times, it might perhaps have remained without reproach, and gave the helm to Principle;

> "With mean compliance ne'er betray'd my trust;
> "Nor was so civil as to prove unjust:
> "Nor fear'd the anger of the Wise to raise."

Upon all comprehensive public questions there have ever appeared some individuals whose private interests, or whose narrow and mistaken views of their interests, have ranged them in opposition to the genuine interests of Society. Whether, elated with the hope of contributing to general usefulness, and the redemption of a fallen —— at least I may say the recovery of a decaying—Art, I overlooked the impediments that might naturally be expected from that quarter? whether I made false estimates of the comparative strength and influence of those interested individuals? or whether I flattered myself that the power which stood between them and me was too friendly to the interests of Art to expel me from my public situation without a candid and impartial inquiry, of which I feared not the result? it is here bootless to inquire. For the present it is enough, that I am publicly known to have been dismissed the Lecture-room of the Royal Institution, in the midst of a course

of Lectures; which I am now compelled, as the least exceptionable mode of vindicating my past conduct and maintaining the justness of my principles, to publish in their present state, imperfect as it is.

Dismissal from a situation so public, attended by circumstances so notorious, is more than an accusation (from which it would behove the party accused to exculpate himself); it is an implied censure. The public must naturally suppose I had been dismissed for misconduct which deserved dismissal; and that the Managers had chosen to veil that misconduct in a delicate silence. *Under such silence the guilty would be glad to find refuge:* CONSEQUENTLY, *under such silence I must publicly scorn to take shelter.*

With this impression on my mind I wrote, soon after my dismissal, the following address *to the Proprietors of, and Subscribers to, the Royal Institution:*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT is known to many that it was my wish and intention to have continued my course of Lectures of the present season, in weekly succession, until I had brought down the critical

history of the art of Engraving, to the period of the union of the Northern with the Italian school: but my progress has been arrested by a communication from the Managers, wherein they inform me that "they have resolved to discontinue my lectures."

As this resolution was passed at a very slender meeting; and as it is customary, in most public Societies, for the resolutions entered into at one meeting to remain for confirmation till the next; I have waited, not without considerable anxiety, until another meeting has passed.

The act of *four* managers, I thought, might possibly be rescinded at a fuller meeting; or even be revoked by the same four, on reflection. In the present case, I hoped they would, on reflection, perceive how contrary to the custom of England, and to every rule and principle of equity, it is, to proceed to judgment without hearing evidence, and on a vague accusation evidently proceeding from an interested quarter.

It is true, I admitted the charge of having *alluded to* a certain individual—not a living character: but it is also true, that I offered to read before the Committee of Managers the

exact words in which the allusion was conveyed; and that this offer was declined, though none of these gentlemen were present at the delivery of the Lecture.

I hazard nothing in affirming, that no lecture upon Art has ever been delivered without personal allusions. Not the having alluded, then, but the justifiable or unjustifiable nature and occasion of the allusion, was the fit object of inquiry.

Of the pleasure I took in imparting to you what little I knew on the subject of Engraving, I regret the loss: and shall probably be induced to print the discourses which I have delivered, in my own vindication: in which case, I shall add such Notes as, I trust, will fully justify and support my opinions, that the talents of Sir Robert Strange, Woollett, Vivares, Bartolozzi, and the rest of those artists whom I named in my last Discourse, were the real causes of the commerce for Prints turning in favour of this country; and that its subsequent decline has proceeded, in great part, from the ignorant dictations and mismanagement of persons who were not qualified to lead the public taste in engraved works of Art. These are points towards which

I thought it my duty to direct the attention of the audience with which I was honoured at the Royal Institution: and these are *the* points upon which I am really at issue with a few interested and ignorant venders of Art; who, while they are virtually circumventing their own purposes, are endeavouring to throw the blame of the failure of commercial profit upon the body of Engravers—amongst whom they will find one, at least, who is neither to be tamed to wrongs, nor intimidated to silence.

I have thought it necessary publicly to say thus much in explanation of recent events. I beg leave to add, since the opportunity of doing so elsewhere is denied me, my most cordial Thanks for the attention with which I have been honoured in the Lecture-Room.

Queen-Ann-Street, East,
28th March, 1806. J. LANDSEER.

The above address was sent for insertion to three Morning papers. I was promised it should appear in two of them as soon as the reports of Parliamentary debates should leave room: but these promises were never performed. The editor of the third, had the honesty to say, that

he thought I had been unfairly treated by the managers of the Royal Institution; but that he was intimate with Mr. Josiah Boydell, and as my letter might affect his (Mr. B.'s) interests, he desired to be excused inserting it in his paper. If I would print it, and send it round only to the Proprietors of the Royal Institution, of whom he was one, I might obtain some redress at the next annual election of officers. Before I followed this advice, however, I thought it necessary to look into the printed constitution and laws of the Institution; and I there found that, even though a disposition to redress me might prevail among them, the Proprietors had too little power over what was called their property, to effect such a purpose. So at least it appeared to me. In justice to the independent character of the Editor of the Evening Star, I ought to add, that in his paper my address was printed.

Of the means which have been employed to dismiss me from lecturing, and deter me from printing, the most insidious and successful have been the hue and cry words *Personality*, and *Attack;* which have pursued me from the committee-room to the newspapers, and by which my adversaries seem to hope I shall be hunted down. But I confidently trust it will finally be

obvious that *my motives, throughout, have been* PUBLIC *motives; whilst those of my enemies have been* PERSONAL: *and that so far from* ATTACKING, *I have been acting on the* DEFENSIVE; endeavouring to protect the art of Engraving and its professors, and repelling the unprovoked attacks, and countermining the sap, of Mr. Jos. Boydell, and those who act with him.

I might, perhaps, have let Mr. Boydell's vain and unfounded boast, that his uncle's exertions turned the Print trade from an import to an export, pass without animadversion: and his equally unfounded, feeble, and ambiguous attempt* to reproach the most respectable engravers with unnecessary delay, I might have allowed to

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* For the former see Mr. B.'s Pamphlet, more particularly alluded to in the Notes I have added to the Lectures; for the latter see his Proposal for a Print of the Battle of Trafalgar and Death of Lord Nelson. To have let these pass without notice, would have been a species of misprision of treason to art and its professors; but the truth is, that I thought a Pamphlet so ill imagined, and so weakly written, as Mr. B.'s, would be little read or enquired after; and the advertised proposal for an anonymous Print, I thought but poorly calculated to entrap even the most unwary. I have since seen the Pamphlet at the houses of several members of the public societies for promoting Art; and it has fallen on the table of almost every Artist, like Harpy excrements.

sink in its own insignificance: but, in that discourse for which it was judged proper to discontinue my Lectures, I had two positions to maintain in favour of Engraving; one of them of the utmost importance, as I conceive, to its well-being, if not to its existence *as an Art*; and the other of equal importance in a Commercial view of the subject.

The positions, when placed in the abstract, are these. First, *That in a Commercial Country, like ancient Greece, or modern Europe, where any degree of rivalry in the Fine Arts exists between the several states, and where the productions of any one of those arts have become an article of Commerce, the profits of that commerce will be, or will turn, in favour of that particular state where the greatest quantum and highest degrees of talent exist among the professors of that particular Art.* Secondly, *That if in a given Art, Ignorance shall assume, and attempt to exercise, the superintendence of Knowledge, talent in that art will, from that period, begin to decline.*

These positions could no otherwise, with so much propriety, be supported as by the evidence of facts: indeed, as the reader will see, in the

Lecture itself, I reasoned immediately from the facts; considering them, as I should any other historical occurrences which might fall within the scope of my plan to notice, and without formally stating, as I have done here, the dry abstract propositions. It is true, the late Alderman Boydell, when compared with Mecænas or Mummius, is but recently dead; yet is he as compleatly beyond the reach of being affected by any sublunary censure, as far as is known to us mortals, as if centuries had passed over his grave: and if in establishing or enforcing a principle, or pointing out a path of improvement, there can be any reason for preferring one historic fact to another, it appears to me that it is better to select a recent than a remote occurrence; because it can more easily be probed by inquiry, and its consequences, if evil, can be more readily obviated.

If it should be said that, though the Alderman is gone, his heirs and his property remain, and may possibly be affected by my strictures; I shall reply, that our respect for property is not yet so exclusive as to silence inquiry or sanction imposition; and that, even among those who respect property more than they honour talents,

it has ever been held good political, and, which is still better, good moral, doctrine, that the interests of individuals should give way to the general good. Every path of improvement would else be barred; and every gate of depravity, both of taste and morals, be set wide open.

I hope and trust that an Englishman may say these things, and more, without being liable to the imputation of having been actuated by a motive so unworthy as that of attacking an individual: nor do I fear that the thinking part of mankind will consider the empty boast of the present Mr. Boydell, which may have contributed to lead my attention more particularly to the points in question, as any fault of mine. My statement goes to shew, in direct opposition to his, that the abilities of the engravers who flourished in this country about thirty years ago, effected an important and patriotic change in favour of the British print trade; that the European commerce for prints must, and would, have turned in favour of England, at the time it did, if no such persons as the Messrs. Boydells had ever existed; and that, but for the ignorant superintendence of such persons, it would probably have remained so—for we shall always find

a sufficient number of merchants who will be ready enough to discover and follow, where profit leads the way.

The second position is, I fear, also supported, or I should rather say corroborated, by the evidence of facts: but as my adversaries have publicly stated the decay of Engraving, I have rather chosen to admit than to adduce the instances; for the obvious reason that to admit them superseded all necessity for naming living characters, or for alluding to them except in the aggregate. In truth, the reasoning on this point is so far from being confined to Engraving, and rests upon an experience of such unfortunate amplitude, that it may almost be regarded as a self evident truth. It may be more than suspected, that, *wherever* ignorance presides over knowledge, similar consequences will ensue: for such superintendence cannot be productive of any other but contingent or fortuitous good; its general tendency must always be in an opposite direction; and whether it be placed at the head of the Arts, or of a public Institution,—whether the desire of gain, or the gratification of vanity, be its impelling motive, the public is equally liable to suffer. That it *has* suffered *in Art*, the reasoning of my obnoxious Lecture goes to prove; (though how much it has suffered might be diffi-

cult to say:) and if a man knowing nothing, or knowing little, of Science or Art, were to undertake to engage or manage Lecturers on the Arts and Sciences—unable to exercise any judgment of his own, he must depend on the opinions of others (the value of whose opinions he could not estimate); and the same personal recommendation which *might* introduce a man of science to his notice, would be much more likely to introduce a pliant parasite, or a blockhead of bold pretensions.

Such a superintendent, not being able to take genuine pleasure in performing the genuine duties of the office he has undertaken to fill, will gradually come to consider those duties as troublesome; and, as far as may consist with the gratification of his vanity, will delegate their performance to those who are put in authority under him—which may chance to be a fortunate thing for the public.

Not being able to measure the value of a discourse by any better, or by any other, test, than the *number* of auditors it may obtain, he will assuredly, and for very obvious reasons, fail, *as far as depends on him*, to "convert the frivolous part of the metropolis" into any thing better;

and—— but there is no end to the mischiefs of ignorant superintendence——

Alas! with the mistakes or malignity of such a man, whether he be the conductor of a publication of Engravings, or *the director* of a public institution, may no artist or man of science, in the conscientious pursuit of his duty, come in hostile collision: lest he be tempted to forget for a moment, the mild influence and dignity of his studies; or, forsaking his office and rank in society, to dip his pencil or his pen in bitterness; or lest his resentment hurry him where, perhaps, none will commend his temerity, and many will blame his imprudence.

It may easily be supposed that, whilst engaged in countermining secret machinations, and repelling unprovoked attacks upon the art of Engraving and its professors, I was very far from expecting that the mock patrons and real enemies of Engraving, would have met with such powerful auxiliaries as the four gentlemen who took on themselves my dismissal; and that I should have had to carry on, at once, a foreign and a civil war: nor is it surprising, that, under such circumstances, I have been dislodged from my post. Defeated, but neither disgraced nor

dismayed, it now behoved me to look toward my resources with what steady reliance, what persevering courage, and what prudent regard for the good of the service, I might possess. By these sentiments I am still actuated. But should there be any, among the friends of Engraving, who fear more from my zeal than they hope from my discretion, let them reflect, that what I shall have done and said will at least promote discussion; and that discussion—English discussion—is what the present state of English engraving most pressingly requires.

I am, therefore, again in the field; with unbroken forces, though with less advantageous ground; and shall certainly not, in this place, desert the cause or the principles I espoused in the beginning. In my mind, if there be any cause where a moderate man may assume an heroic tone of sentiment, and vow "to rise victorious or to rise no more," it is a cause where a moral province of British art, including a profitable source of British commerce, is assailed by ignorant cupidity of wealth, that would lose by victory and gain by defeat. What should be here, to "sickly o'er with the pale cast of thought, the native hue of resolution?"——

It has been truly said, that—

> " Some, to the fascination of a word
> " Surrender judgment hoodwink'd."———

I have felt it necessary to say thus much in reply to *two* words, *personality* and *attack*; which two words have been made use of toward me, upon the same principle that we daily hear knaves decry *insincerity*, whilst every virtuous character is ardently longing for society where he may indulge in the native sincerity of his heart. At the same time, I have cherished a hope of thereby undeceiving those persons whom I have cause to know have been egregiously imposed upon, in the affair of my dismissal; among whom, I may perhaps have reason to reckon the greater part of the four gentlemen to whom I have alluded above.

The reader will have observed that, in my Letter to the Proprietors and Subscribers, I have affirmed that no lecture upon Art was ever delivered without personal allusions (either to the living or dead.) Yet, lest any person, from the abrupt discontinuance of my Lectures, and from what has been subsequently reported, should have inferred that, by alluding to the

late Mr. Boydell, I had transgressed a standing rule of the Royal Institution, it may be necessary for me, not only to lay down in general terms, and by reasoning to prove, that no such rule is or can be observed in the Lecture-room, but, in justice to the managers, or because the conduct of public institutions is not always free from inconsistencies, to aver that no such rule has ever been imparted to me. After the first season of my reading, the manager of the lectures informed me that it was a rule of the place not to *name living characters:* the letter of this rule I had already transgressed in naming Mr. Bartolozzi, (who, happily, is still a living character), and two other gentlemen, whose names have not since appeared in the lecture. At the time I was informed of this rule, I mentioned that, the best illustrations of some of my principles being to be found in the works of Mr. Bartolozzi, I could but ill do without them, and a discretionary power in this, and in other similar cases, was tacitly allowed me. In fact, the delicacy and discretion of a public lecturer will, upon such occasions, always attemper, but never subdue, his zeal for truth: and (if I may be permitted to say so) this rule of widest latitude, with a PROPER *responsibility* attached to

it, will probably be found the best, if not the only, rule that will be practicable.

I have, indeed, lately been told, by a gentleman connected with the Institution, that the managers consider *themselves* responsible for what is delivered in the Lecture-room:—an assertion at which I could not but be much surprised; because it is not only not in unison with the tenor of their conduct, but impracticable in itself. If they took on themselves this responsibility, they would not fail to depute the manager of the lectures, or some other confidential person, to hear the lectures rehearsed before they were publicly delivered. They would not, surely, consider themselves accountable for the truth or falsehood of doctrines, of which they are totally ignorant, until those doctrines are publicly delivered in the Lecture-room—for evils against which they take no precaution—for what, when once uttered it is too late to recal.

This species of responsibility, not only could not be undertaken by the managers without such previous rehearsal, but, if proposed, would not be consented to by the lecturers; who always consider, and ought to consider, *themselves* as

entitled to the whole credit or discredit that may attach to sentiments, which are delivered by themselves, and understood by the audience as being the sentiments of the lecturers. Men of science could not submit to consider themselves as mere puppets; to be moved by wires from above; to fret and strut their hour upon the stage, and then be seen, and heard, and recollected, no more. Such men would either find other lecture-rooms, or would have the wit to stipulate for a license* to stretch on the rack of criticism, or would decline lecturing altogether: and the Lecture-room of the Royal Institution, consigned over to dulness, and becoming a theatre of tameness and inanity, would gradually be deserted.

Responsibility for the truths of science or art, or for what public lecturers may say in illustration of the truths of science or art, not only cannot be undertaken by the managers of public institutions, and, if proposed, would not be consented to by scientific lecturers; but is neither

* I am informed that, since the discontinuance of my Lectures has become the subject of conversation, this joke has actually been played off—and with success.

expected to be so proposed, or undertaken, or consented to, by the public at large: and to shew this the more plainly, I will put extreme cases. Let the reader suppose I had uttered treason instead of truth; or, on the other hand, let him suppose—if he can—for a moment, that I had uttered *such* truth as the latest posterity might listen to with advantage: I may venture to say, that in neither of these cases would the manager of the lecturers have been *apprehended* as being my accomplice.

To be more serious, responsibility, if I mistake not, must always be a thing of actual or implied compact between the parties concerned. The word responsible is always used with *to* or *for:* at least, these words, if not mentioned, are presumed and understood: the latter referring to the cause of responsibility; the former, to some party who has a superior right to the power delegated and exercised. I believe it is understood by the proprietors and subscribers, that the managers of the Royal Institution should and do undertake to provide fit and proper lecturers; men of character and talents in the several arts and sciences, and in other respects qualified for the task. For this, they are or

ought to be responsible. Here ends the responsibility of the managers; and here, as it appears to me, begins that of the lecturers.

I hope, however, none will infer from this, that I mean to deny to the managers the right or power of dismissing any lecturer they please; whatever truth or falsehood, sense or nonsense, he may have uttered—being themselves *responsible* for such dismissal: but let them recollect, that human power without responsibility is utterly unknown in this country, and is an anomaly in nature; and that, for breaking a contract with me without a candid examination, they are answerable to *some* power superior to themselves —though, at present, I am uncertain whether that power be the Proprietors of the Royal Institution, the Public at large, the King on his throne, or the God within the breast!

It may not be improper to recal to the reader's memory, that, when before the board of management, I admitted, as stated in my letter printed in the Evening Star, the charge of having *alluded to* the *late* Mr. Alderman Boydell: on my offering to read the words in which the allusion was conveyed, I was answered, "No! as you seem to admit the fact (of having alluded to the late

Mr. B.), that does not seem to be necessary"—or "that will not be necessary."

Now, while I have been dismissed for this allusion or fact, other lecturers have been freely allowed, not merely to allude to, but to *name living persons*, notwithstanding the asserted rule of the Royal Institution to the contrary; and even to advertise such names in the printed syllabus of the lectures of the passing week. For this I am not blaming Dr. Crotch. If the public taste can be improved by such comments; if his own heart—his own perception of truth, justify him, it is enough: he is himself responsible for the rectitude of his taste and the justness of his observations. But by what logical or what legal distinctions will the manager of the lectures satisfy his constituents, of his own impartiality or consistency, or that the errors of a dead Boydell are to be held more sacred than those of a living Clementi and Hulmandel? Would the success of a dealer, though alive, be an object more dear than the reputation of an existing artist? Or are either of these objects *so* dear as the improvement of the public taste?

Some years ago, the men of science residing in Paris planned a critical review, wherein every

article reviewed was to have had the name of the reviewer affixed. I remember Condorcet was to have undertaken the mathematical, and, I believe, Fourcroy or Lavoisier the chemical, department. That such a review would be followed by all the good consequences which philosophers might hope from it, I am not prepared to maintain: but if such men as Condorcet and Dr. Crotch will candidly and ostensibly favour the public with *their opinions of works of art and science as they appear*, whether their authors be living or not, I cannot but think *that* public should be as much obliged to them as to a masked battery of reviewers played off from behind a bookseller's counter*———

* *Conversation with a Friend.*

FRIEND. Hold! From one who has literary reputation either to gain or lose, this may be thought too bold: The reviews, though masked, are not batteries; for they deal great and extensive benefits. As an offering of atonement, or as an act of justice, you should add, that though the public might be *as much*, it could not be *more obliged* than it is by the candid, though anonymous, reviews of literary productions.

AUTHOR. But my book will itself be a kind of critical review, and reviewers do not publicly review each other.

FRIEND. That does not signify. Yours will not be an anonymous review, and you will be hauled over the coals.

AUTHOR. I must then prepare for the ordeal. But *because* mine will not be an anonymous review, it behoves me to let the passage stand—I will, however, let your addition stand also.

I would here ask, are not the errors, both wilful and unintentional, of all those persons who are engaged in the service, or who undertake to administer to the pleasures, of the public, the subjects of daily animadversion? Are not poets, painters, statuaries, architects, musicians, managers of theatres, players—in short, authors and artists of every description, subject to perpetual comment—in conversation, in newspapers, in reviews, and in various other ways? Are managers of institutions, or even the highest servants of the crown, exempt from critical animadversion? Let it also be recollected, that of works of art (such as Boydell's Shakespear) and their conductors, and of Engravings in general, there is no such thing as a printed English review existing. When these things are taken into consideration, I shall not fear to commit to the candid reader's determination, the question of whether such strictures as mine deserved to be requited with the loss and discouragement which I have been condemned to suffer?

It will appear a curious fact that, by gentlemen who attended the delivery of the two last discourses which I had the honour (for so I must still esteem it) of reading (namely, the third, and early part of the sixth, in this volume) I

was complimented on " the address with which I had imparted so much useful caution, and other necessary information, to my audience." On the receipt of my official dismissal, I stood, therefore, in the extraordinary predicament of having been commended and condemned for the same thing—with this difference, that those who commended were present at the Lectures; and those who condemned were not, and only knew of the sentiments I had delivered, from the reports of persons who were evidently interested in misrepresentation.

To cherish approbation thus spontaneously bestowed, and to allow but little comparative weight or value to censure thus darkly implied, it will be allowed was natural: in what degree it was just, is now submitted to the impartial public.

After this full and frank (perhaps tedious) declaration of my aims and intentions, I cannot foresee that any of my readers will deem it necessary for me to add further arguments in proof of the moral value of my subject, and the consequent propriety of my exertions, or the purity of my motives. Probably all arguments on these points which I may have any right to expect

will be followed by any degree of conviction, should be drawn from the Lectures themselves.

With respect to the Notes. To argue past forbearance from present severity, or to adduce present severity in proof of past forbearance, would, perhaps, be esteemed no very powerful logic. Yet, I could wish the reader to remark whether there be not a difference, with respect to the manner of enforcing my sentiments and introducing my characters on the stage, between the discourses themselves, as they were originally written and delivered, and what I have added since I have felt and assumed the rights of a man who has intended and endeavoured well, and been ill requited for his endeavours, and thwarted in the rectitude of his intentions. If such a difference exists, I entreat him—guided by his own feelings—to place it to its true account. Further, as in the works of Rembrandt, and some other masters, faulty parts sometimes unite to produce a good general effect, I must entreat him not to forget the tenour and general tendency of my views: and rather to regard the present fragment by the intention, as far as it evinces itself, which would have governed the whole, if I had compleated my design, than to scrutinise it in detail. When the "heart is in-

diting of a good matter," the hand goes fearlessly to work, unrestrained by any littleness of solicitude: if mine has been warm with honest indignation or patriotic wishes, my writing could not be less than bold; and I must hope that but few will think it has been more. The true object of my solicitude has been to write so as to evince that the purpose I wish to see effected is desirable, and of some public importance; by shewing that the Art of Engraving, in the scope of its possible energies, is more intimately connected with the prosperity and renown of a great commercial empire, and with the general happiness of man, than has heretofore been generally perceived—and to do this without rendering myself liable to that species of arrogance which dares to anticipate the sentiments of the learned or the great, or the decision of the public. I am ready to own that the cold courtly caution of one who fears to offend a feeble, more than he hopes to gratify a generous mind, has not been mine. I too much honour and respect the nobility of sentiment which prompted Tacitus to teach that as adulation prevails, the energies of national dignity and individual genius must decline. I too much fear the truth of Lord Strangford's aphorism, that " the decline of public spirit, in matters of taste, is a certain indication of politi-

cal decay." Yet, amid the hopes and fears on this subject by which every reflecting mind is alternately elated and depressed, I would solace the Arts, as I solace myself, by the recollection that the age and country in which we live, are not the age and country of the Poet whom the latter nobleman has delighted to honour: who "lived poor and miserable, and died so; though he excelled all the poets of his time*."

J. L.

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* Inscription on the tomb of Camoens.

LECTURE I.

Exordium, containing a brief statement of the Lecturer's object and plan—Early origin and uses of Engraving—Of Chaldean, Indian, Egyptian, and Hebrew engraving—Engraved sacerdotal ornaments of Aaron—Signets—Hieroglyphics — Scarabees — The sarcophagus taken from the French—Conjectures on the ancient mode of engraving on precious stones and other very hard substances—Of Etruscan, Sidonian, and Greek engraving—Shield of Achilles and other classical engravings — Greek gems — Error of confounding Grecian excellence in this or in any art with absolute perfection — Of Roman gem-engraving—Vain endeavours of the Augustan age to revive the art—Causes and consequences of its decline—Summary.

LECTURE I.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

UNDER the benign auspices of an institution, whose laudable object is the dissemination of such knowledge as may promote the general happiness of society, it has become my duty to discourse from this place on the art of ENGRAVING. I must beg leave to premise, that, *this* is not the place from whence to teach the attainment of practical excellence to students in the art; neither can I be supposed to have undertaken to inform masters of its theory. A short, but emphatic sentence of Dryden, (which he applies to the state and condition of painting in his time) contains, as I apprehend, a true specification of the object of my present undertaking. I must endeavour *so* " to discourse of this noble art, that those who before were rather fond of it, than

knowingly admired it, may defend their *inclination*, by their *reason*, that they may understand those excellencies which they blindly valued, so as not to be farther imposed on by bad pieces."*

The means whereby I propose to accomplish this object, are, to commence with an historical sketch of the progress of engraving, from its origin to the discovery of printing, (in the middle of the fifteenth century,) to follow this with explanations of the various modes of engraving that are practised, with a view to their being printed; and afterwards to dwell more particularly on such passages in the works of the several engravers, as may assist our critical knowledge of the art. I shall occasionally reflect on its moral influence and commercial importance, and inquire into their practical extension; and finally, shall attempt to ascertain and explain to you its theory.

If it shall be objected that the theory

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* Preface to Dryden's Du Fresnoy.

which should form the critic, and that which should guide the practice of the student, are essentially the same, my reply will be, that *if* the student in engraving can derive benefit from any principles or rules that I may be able to suggest, I shall have but so much the more reason to be pleased with my efforts, and there is in the schools of this country no public Professor of the art, to complain that I have invaded his province.

Of the difficulties or ease of the task which I have undertaken, it would ill become me either to boast or complain: I shall endeavour to accomplish it to the best of my ability, and as it will be the *first* endeavour of the kind, I have reason to think that you will receive it rather with indulgence than with severity.

AMONG the various arts which, by the gradual development of human ingenuity, have decorated the fair fabric of civilized society, that of Engraving is one of the most ancient. It was the earliest mode which the mind suggested, and the hand of man attained, of imparting useful information and of displaying ornamental art: for the principal part of our knowledge of the only nations that have emerged to modern notice, from the dark regions of remote antiquity, we are indebted to engraven records: the precepts and laws of the ancients were engraven on stone or on metal; the poems of Orpheus and Hesiod are said to have been cut in lead, and the shields of Hercules, and the heroes who distinguished themselves in the early Theban wars,* as well as the more celebrated shield of Achil-

* In Eschylus's tragedy of the Seven Chiefs against Thebes, the heroes are severally known at a distance by the devices on their shields. Whether this poetical, be also an historical fact, the reader will determine.

les, are described as having been ornamented with heraldic and historical engravings.*

Some have even supposed the art to be of antediluvian extraction: the learning or credulity of Josephus, discovered one of the engraved pillars of Seth in a stone monument of Syria: whilst others, with as little probability or reflection, have imagined that the divine precepts which we are still taught to obey, and which are reported to have been "engraven by the finger of God," were the very first engravings produced, in point of time as well as importance: but however little an engraver might be inclined to doubt that *his* art has as fair a claim to divine origin as any other, he is compelled on the same unquestionable authority of the Pentateuch,†

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* In the Essay prefixed to his Biographical Dictionary of Engravers, Mr. Strutt says, "it has been constantly understood by the generality of authors, both ancient and modern, that these shields were ornamented with engraving;" but the most classically learned of modern painters informs me, that the shield of Hercules was sculptured in low relief, with moveable parts that made a noise as it was shook by the hero.

† Genesis, ch. xxxviii. v. 18.

to admit that signets, which presuppose an art of engraving, were in use long before this awful and mysterious æra; yet were he disposed to contend with the painter for the palm of priority, he might do so with plausibility at least, since the Decalogue, which forbade the Israelites to worship *graven* * images, says nothing of the far more fascinating art of painting, so much more likely, had it existed, to have seduced them to idolatry. But, whether to delineate a form by incision, or by difference of colour, on a hard or a soft substance, was first invented, can now be of little consequence; and if we agree not to bewilder or protract our inquiry, by attending to miraculous communication, or legendary tales of antediluvian monuments, or the rival and doubtful claims of Persia and China to the most remote existence as nations, it will appear that the art of engraving, or of making intelligible incisions on hard and durable substances, originated either in India, or in Assyria, or in Egypt. It may possi-

* A very appropriate term for the hieroglyphic engravings of Egypt.

bly have travelled with the costly stones which were not uncommon in the patriarchal ages, from the mines of Hindostan; and the Hebrew patriarchs, or their followers may have learned to practise this art, or at least to avail themselves of its useful and ornamental advantages, from their Assyrian ancestors, or from the Egyptians. According to Moses, Abraham, who sojourned in Egypt during a famine, was the son of a Chaldean; Cedrenus* says further, that his father, Terah, was a maker of idols or household gods; (which were either carved or engraven) and Dr. Hager, in asserting the high antiquity of the Assyrian empire, has produced a valuable compendium of Chaldean art and science. The remoteness of their astronomical observations, the early grandeur of their edifices, and the simplicity of a mode of inscription which does not appear to be borrowed from that of any other people, are strong arguments in support of his

* "Cedrenus asserts, that Serug and Terah, the progenitors of Abraham, were both makers of images; and adds, that Abraham burnt the idols of Terah his father."—Hayley's Essay on Sculpture, p. 191.

opinion, that Assyria, (or Chaldea) of which Babylon was the original metropolis, was the most ancient of the Asiatic nations. Their inscriptions (if not their astronomical observations) evidently shew the previous existence of an art of engraving, being impressed from intaglio stamps on bricks found among the ruins of a very ancient and magnificent city, on the banks of the Euphrates, supposed to be Babylon. Of these bricks many have been brought to Europe, and some of them may be seen in the museum of the Hon. East-India Company, but their characters no person has yet been able to read.

The same collection contains also a much longer and more elaborate inscription, said to be Babylonian, and in *extraordinary* preservation. It is engraven on stone, and apparently with such a tool as engravers employ at present: its characters, like those on the Babylonian bricks, are formed as if of nails, or rather, I think, of arrow or spear heads; and the very learned superintendant of the museum, in his zeal for the records of antiquity, has had both this and

the inscriptions on the bricks accurately copied and printed on paper, in the hope that some person may be found who will be able to decypher their contents.

Having seen this curious engraving, I am free to confess that my own judgment would have led me to distrust its antiquity, had I not been taught rather to distrust my own judgment. The engraving seems very fresh, the accidental irregularities,* as well as the smoothened parts of its surface, are engraved over, and the stone, upon trial, was found to be soft. I should even have inclined to doubt whether a calcareous substance *could* have been preserved for so many ages under a mound of earth, without some transmutation of its substance—at least to the depth of the twentieth part of an inch from its surface, beyond which the engraving does not penetrate.

Comparing the inscriptions on the en-

* Those who had arrived at the art of cutting an inscription, could easily have squared a stone.

graved cylinders of loadstone, jasper, and chalcedony, in the British Museum, which are generally esteemed Persepolitan, with those on the Babylonian bricks, Dr. Hager has, I think, satisfactorily shewn, that their characters are Chaldean, or at least of Chaldean origin; and the surmise of Raspe, that they resemble the Chinese, and his inference that the Chinese character had formerly been known and cultivated to the west of the Ganges, can no longer be entitled to credit. It is far more probable that all the engravings with the arrow-head inscriptions are of Chaldean derivation, and as most of the cylindrical gems which exhibit these characters, are perforated longitudinally, and appear to have turned on a metal axis; they are as likely to have been used as seals, as they are to have been worn as amulets.

Of the early productions of Babylonian art, which have been ascribed to the magnificence of Semiramis, Diodorus has transmitted a very particular description. It is true, the mortal existence of the queen has

recently been denied;* the palaces of Assyria may perhaps be allowed to have stood on a firmer foundation.

"She built," says Diodorus, "two palaces, one at each end of the bridge, upon the banks of the Euphrates: that on the west had a high and stately wall, upon which were pourtrayed in the bricks, before they were burned,† all sorts of living creatures, with great art, and in curious colours. This wall was in circuit forty furlongs, three hundred bricks thick, and in height one hundred yards, upon which were turrets one hundred and forty yards high. The third and innermost wall, which immediately surrounded the palace, was thirty furlongs in compass, and far exceeded the middle wall both in height and thickness.

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* By Mr. Bryant, the boldest of modern mythologists.

† None of the Babylonian bricks brought to this country appear to have been burned by fire, but hardened by the intense heat of a vertical sun. If the Chaldeans laid them for this purpose on the plains of Shinaar, as they probably did, they might easily trace or engrave on them men, horses, &c. while in their moist state, of the very large dimensions that is here intimated.

On this wall, and on the towers, were represented the shapes of various animals, artfully expressed, and in most lively colours; especially was represented a general hunting of wild beasts, each four cubits high and upwards, where Semiramis was to be seen on horseback, striking a leopard with a dart, and next to her, her husband, Ninus, in close fight with a lion."

In support of these remote and marvellous accounts, Diodorus cites an authority which has sometimes been doubted: but if we compare the disputed fragments of Ctesias* with an undisputed passage of the prophet Ezekiel, the account of the former will seem to be entitled to more credit than some commentators have been willing to allow him. It is worthy of observation, that the prophet is speaking expressly of the prone-

* Ctesias, a native of Cnidos, was the favourite physician of Artaxerxes, and had consequently far better opportunities of accurate information respecting the antiquities of this part of Asia, than the generality of classic authors could possess.

ness of the Jews to idolatry at a very early period: in the poetical elevation of the language of prophecy, he personifies Jerusalem, and says, that " when in her youth she saw men pourtrayed upon a wall—the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermillion,* all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of *their*† nativity, as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doated on them."‡

The Ancient Universal History, in describing the costume of Assyria, (which does not appear to have materially differed from that of Persia) says, it was customary for the people to wear seal rings. If this be meant of the Assyrians of this early period, and be supported on good authority, we need

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* It appears, from the united testimony of the prophet and the historian, that the incisions or impressions made in the bricks while in their moist state, were afterward filled with durable colour, like some of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, or as modern engravings on the precious metals are sometimes filled with enamel.

† *i. e.* of the nativity of the Jews.

‡ Ezek. ch. xxiii. v. 14, &c.

be at no further loss in accounting for the origin, either of this custom among the Hebrews, or for that of the art of seal engraving. In three generations from Abraham we read of a signet, which appears to have been a personal ornament, as well as an instrument of ratification; and when Moses had liberated the Jews from Egyptian bondage, and while they were yet wandering in the desart, he was directed, as we learn from the book of Exodus, "to make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, "Holiness to the Lord." He was also ordered to take "two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel, according to their birth, with the work of an engraver (or plougher) on stone, like the engravings of a signet."

Of the artists who executed these and some other of the engraved ornaments of the high priest, Moses has repeatedly made very honourable mention. Bezaleel, who appears to have been acquainted with the arts of the jeweller and lapidary, as well as

that of the engraver, is described to have been " filled with the spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, to devise cunning works; to work in gold, in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them; and it was put into his heart that both he and Aholiab might teach *them that were filled with wisdom* to work all manner of work of the Engraver:"* a restriction which there is abundant room to wish had continued to be observed, since it is certain that many of those who have shewn themselves filled with folly, have since been initiated into the mysteries of Bezaleel and Aholiab.

However this may have been, the scriptural accounts of the engraving of precious stones in and before the time of Moses, are accurately detailed, and as they shed no inconsiderable light upon the migrations of art, and the history of man, are curious and important: yet, curious and important as they must be allowed to be, they are presumptively of

* Exodus, ch. xxxv.

far less antiquity than the hieroglyphic engravings, that still cover with a veil of mystery the colossal wonders of the successive capitols of Egypt.

The very ingenious Mr. Raspe has drawn a plausible inference in favour of his opinion, that India was the parent of Gem-engraving, from a local circumstance. The art of engraving on substances which only the diamond can penetrate, and only the peninsula of India could supply, he seems to think could have originated in no other country. Commerce, attendant upon the extending pomp and luxury of the East, gradually transported these precious materials to the west and to the north; but the speculations of the Egyptians, according to Mr. Raspe, would never have induced them to break diamonds, or stamp them in mortars, for the purpose of trying experiments; such speculations are more rationally to be expected in the neighbourhood of the mines of Golconda, the native country of the diamond and other hard stones, where their properties and beauties must be ascertained

before they could become objects of exportation. In a subsequent part of his Essay he speaks of Hindoo engravings, and particularly of a lion in emerald in Mr. Wilkins's collection, different in style, but equal in merit, to the early gems of the Egyptians.

Ancient Hindoo gems, however, are very scarce in comparison with the gems of Egypt, or even with those esteemed Persepolitan; and when the imperishable nature of their substances is considered, their scarcity is certainly no corroboration of Mr. Raspe's hypothesis. Indeed, much as the tenor of this gentleman's treatise is to be admired, I cannot think his *reasoning* in this place will safely carry us farther than to shew the Hindoo extraction of the lapidary's process, which in all probability *was* invented before the engraver had learned to exercise his art on the precious materials produced from the mines of Hindostan.

But perhaps even the lapidary's process was not at that time performed by means of diamond powder. It appears to me more

probable that the Corundum stone (commonly termed adamantine spar) was used both by the Hindoo lapidaries and the engravers of Egypt: this spar has not been known in England above thirty five years, and was very imperfectly known until about six years ago, its history and properties were communicated to the Royal Society by the Hon. Mr. Greville, on unquestionable authorities transmitted from India. It is at present employed in the cutting and polishing of precious stones, by the Indian lapidaries, and also by those of China, and has been so employed from time immemorial: it is, of all substances, in point of hardness, next to the diamond, and consequently will operate on all stones that are less hard, and as it is found in great quantities in the peninsula of India, where the natives use it as we do emery, it is very likely to have been carried along with the precious stones to Egypt; or it is even probable that Egypt itself produces the Corundum stone: from Mr. Greville's memoir, combined with what is mentioned in the Encyclopædia Britannica under the article

"Emerald," I am inclined to think, that if the famous emerald mine in the Thebaic desart should be re-discovered, its product would be found to be no other than the green Corundum stone. Pliny* informs us that the Romans used to import sand for the purposes of cutting and polishing hard stones, from Ethiopia and from India, which sand was probably no other than the grit or powder of Corundum. Had the Egyptians possessed any better means of effecting this purpose, it would probably have been transmitted through the Greeks, and Pliny would have known and mentioned it.

The birth-place of engraving is obscured by clouds, which its own productions can alone dispel. At present there is an apparent, and perhaps a real, preponderance of evidence, in favour of the opinion, that the antiquities of Upper Egypt are covered with the earliest productions of this art, and the enthusiasm or observation of Denon has taught him to think they will re-

* Nat. Hist. b. xxxvi. ch. 6.

main to the latest periods of time. On each of their enormous blocks Denon fancied he could see *Eternal duration,* deeply engraven! Even less fervid imaginations than that of this celebrated French traveller, must be struck with the magnitude, the remoteness, and the obscurity of these sublime monuments! Having survived the meaning they were evidently intended to transmit, their very silence may seem to some minds to check the vain hope of terrestrial immortality; while to the better hopes of the antiquarian philosopher, they appear to contain a latent light-invisible, and if the zodiac of Dendera has lately been relumined by a distinguished antiquary of our own country, we may surely indulge the hope that the vast volumes of information presumed to be contained in these engravings will finally be developed.*

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* See the Rev. Mr. Henley's very learned dissertation on this subject, in the Philosophical Magazine, and also, if I mistake not, in the Archeologia of the Antiquarian Society.

In the necessary moral and physical unfolding of the human powers, the attempt to describe and perpetuate a favourite idea by delineating its form, is so simple, when compared with the stupendous and intricate construction of an alphabet, that we cannot hesitate to suppose, that hieroglyphic, or picture, writing, or engraving, must have long, very long preceded the invention of letters: both the old and new worlds unite in attesting this as a fact. The hard and beautiful stones, then, cut and polished in India, when transported to Egypt as articles of regal splendour, would naturally have stimulated the Egyptian engravers (even if we suppose them to have been already acquainted with a substance sufficiently hard to operate on the basalt, granite, and porphyry, which their own country produced) to inquire into, and discover, the means of rendering these seemingly impenetrable substances subservient to the powers and purposes of their art, and having discovered them, the engravers would bestow on such costly materials, the highest efforts of their skill.

The rudest hieroglyphic signets, of which some are still preserved in the British and other celebrated museums, are coarsely engraven on jaspers and cornelians, (burnt, perhaps, in order to render them softer) and apparently with a smaller tool of the same kind as that with which the Egyptians began the manual part of their work, when they converted their obelisks, sarcophagi, and the interiors of their temples, into books of history, biography, and astronomy. It is obvious that in engraving works so large as the latter, the lathe and wheel could not have been employed, and those who are sufficiently interested in these distinctions, to inspect and compare the scarabees and other hieroglyphic gem-engravings in our national collection, may remark some, where the operation of a tool impelled by sudden blows, and the very early state of art, are equally evident: yet it is but fair to state in exception, that I observed the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the Canopuses in the very select and classic collection of Mr. Thomas Hope, to have the same rough and chipped

edges, though these latter are certainly of later date. On the whole, there appears good reason to presume that hieroglyphic engraving, both minute and colossal, was practised in Egypt before the introduction or invention of letters, or diamond-powder, or the seal-engraver's lathe and wheel.

Of what metal or other substance their gravers or scorping-tools were formed, or, if of metal, how they were tempered, I have not been able to discover. It is generally supposed that, even in the present improved state of chemistry, steel cannot be rendered at once so hard and so tough as would be necessary to penetrate porphyry or jasper; yet we know of nothing capable of being converted into a scorping-tool that is better suited to the purpose, and the following remarkable passage in the book of Job, may incline us to acquiesce in the idea that steel was used, while at the same time it informs us that the whole process was not performed by it. The poem of Job is supposed, on the best authorities, to be of a date anterior to the promulgation of the

Jewish laws, and it will be obvious that the passage in question alludes to the early mode of inscription which we are now considering, and also, if I am not mistaken, to the hieroglyphic engravings of the Egyptians. "Who shall ordain now, that my words shall be *drawn?* who shall give that in a memorial that they shall be *delineated?* that with an *instrument of iron*, and *lead*, they shall be cut out in the rock for ever!"*

The most simple and obvious construction we can put upon this passage is—not that the same instrument was constructed partly of iron and partly of lead; nor that it was an iron pen, (as it is rendered in the vulgar translation) but, that the hieroglyphics were first cut in the rough with an iron or steel instrument, probably urged by a mallet, such as is used by the statuaries of the present day, and afterward finished more carefully by the friction of some hard substance reduced to powder and applied with

* Job, ch. xix. v. 23, 24.

lead; for the softer* or more porous the metal with which it is applied, the more rapidly will the friction operate; and perhaps the powder of the Corundum stone may have been used by the Egyptian engravers, on their large as well as small works, from the very commencement of the art.

In the course of revising and adding to this lecture, since I had the honour of delivering it last season, and in consulting and comparing the various authorities to which it became necessary to refer, I have seen that the learned author of the "MUNIMENTA ANTIQUA," whose opinions must ever be entitled to the most respectful notice, has conceived, that a *certain preparation* of lead was used in engraving these works. His words are: "I have been informed by Dr. Moyes, one of the most learned and ingenious chemists of this age, that a certain preparation of lead, rubbed

* Lead and copper are still used for similar purposes by the lapidaries and seal-engravers.

with a blunt iron tool, will quickly wear away the hardest basalt or granite; which circumstance may account for the manner in which the ancient hieroglyphic Egyptian figures were wrought on stones which no modern tool hardly will touch."* I must reluctantly observe here, that it would have been more becoming the high character of one of the most learned and ingenious chemists of the age, if Dr. Moyes had informed us *what*† preparation of lead would have this effect: I could then have compared his hypothesis with my own, by submitting both to the unequivocal test of experiment.

An examination of that ponderous and magnificent trophy of British enterprise and valour, which has been called the sarcophagus of Alexander, and is now, with bolder erudition, affirmed to have been also that of the patriarch Joseph, will tend to corroborate the opinion which I offer as my

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* Munimenta Antiqua, vol. i. p. 4. note.

† A chemical friend of mine suspects that the calx of lead had been tried, and found to have some effect.

own, of the mode of working employed by the Egyptian engravers. On the outside of the lower end, and in several other parts of this surprising piece of antiquity, there occur certain unfinished passages, where the more violent operation of a tool, impelled by sudden blows, is evinced by the chippings and roughness of the edges of the imperfect hieroglyphics.* The difference between these passages, and the hieroglyphics which cover the rest, and particularly the inside of the sarcophagus, and are finished with considerable care and precision, would be sufficient, I should presume, to establish the opinion of its being an unfinished performance, if not of that which I have ventured to advance of their mode of engraving; though with all that can be said or conjectured on the latter subject, it should be re-

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* As much of this appearance as could be copied on a reduced scale, may be traced in the aquatinta print [exhibited at the time of reading the lecture] which Mr. Medland has engraven of this sarcophagus from the very accurate drawing of Mr. Alexander: but those who are deeply interested in the subject will do well to examine the original.

collected, that patience and perseverance have been in all countries virtues of early growth, and perhaps the patience and perseverance of Egypt might justly claim much of the superiority which modern lassitude is willing to ascribe to their instruments.

At this early period, the gem-engravers of Egypt appear to have conceived no higher ideas of excellence, than consisted in inscribing on the oriental precious stones in intaglio, such memorials of science and superstition as their priests and astronomers wished to transmit, and as could be designated by their real or imaginary resemblance or analogy to visible objects, or by some connexion arbitrarily imposed. This must have been at the first so very rudely performed, that what was intended to represent one object gave the idea of another, and perhaps was by a second observer mistaken for something else. It may be seen that their early representations of visible nature, were as remote from accuracy as those of children and savages:

hence the necessity of having their works understood would, in process of time, give birth to the establishment of diagrammatic conventional signs, (a grasshopper, an ibis, or any other object, must be engraven with undeviating precision, according to a prescribed form) which, it has been very judiciously conjectured, the authority of the Egyptian priesthood, co-operating with the real or mistaken interests of society, would easily accomplish, and which is strongly attested by the exact similarity of the recurring hieroglyphics.

From these powerful causes, ancient engraving appears to have remained for centuries in a state of Egyptian bondage, from which she was at last liberated, partly by the invention of letters, and partly by the genius of Greece.

Such appears to me to be the least exceptionable mode of accounting for the origin and early progress of engraving. If I have not taken a wider retrospect, I must beg to have it recollected, that the question

of the Egyptian, Chaldean, and Hindoo claims to the most remote existence as nations, has long baffled the learned, and may still be considered as the darkest and most intricate of the labyrinths of antiquity.

Of the gems which are spoken of about five or six centuries after the period to which we have been attending—if such gems existed, among the personal ornaments of Helen and Ulysses; Helen's might have been an intaglio of Egyptian workmanship, but that of Ulysses was more likely the work of some Greek, or of some Sidonian engraver: the dolphin which is said to have brought Telemachus ashore from a situation of great danger, formed the device, and it was worn by the father in grateful testimony of the miraculous preservation of his son.

I have said, if such gems existed, because the authorities of Plutarch, and Ptolemy-Hephæstion, who alone have mentioned these facts, have sometimes been questioned: but the same enlightened antiquary

and scholar, who has strongly expressed to me his doubts of their truth, has pointed out some other classical engravings which are mentioned by Homer, and are not less worthy of your notice: he has also assisted my inquiries by the liberal communication of his sentiments, and confirmed my opinions, by their concurrence with his own, respecting the celebrated shield of Achilles.

When the disguised Ulysses is describing to Penelope the dress worn by her husband at the Cretan court, he says, according to Pope's translation:

> ——————" Illustrious on his breast,
> The double-clasping gold the king confest,
> In the rich *woof* a hound, mosaic drawn,
> Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappl'd fawn."

I am informed, that in the original, this hound and fawn are not mentioned as being *embroidered* on the robe, but as *engraven* on the double-tongued broach, or breast ornament, with which Penelope says she herself fastened his robe, when Ulysses de-

parted from Ithaca on the Trojan expedition.

Sidon appears to have been about this time a principal seat of decorative art. The engraved cup which Telemachus received from Nestor, was the work of a Sidonian artist; and the silver bowl with which he was presented by Menelaus, "from Sidon's hospitable monarch came." Indeed the repeated mention which Homer makes of this place, its artists, its workmen, and its productions in ivory and the various metals, may incline us to think that the materials imported at Tyre at this remote period, were, in part at least, manufactured at Sidon, and that these cities were respectively the emporia of the arts and commerce of the ancient world; while a British poet might indulge or deplore the idea that Phœnician commerce, had supplied the heroes of Homer, and the arts both of ornament and destruction, with materials from the mines of his own country.

In the far-famed shield of Achilles, the

arts of inlaying the incisions of the graver with tin, gold, silver, steel (lowered to a purple,) and occasionally with some black substance, were added to that of engraving; all were united in a degree of perfection that appeared godlike! and when its elaborate finishing is considered, and the vast quantity of subject matter which its area was made to contain, the combination of art displayed on this shield must surely appear so still. But both Le Clerc and Vleughel in their etchings, and Pope in his annotations on the Iliad, (though he consulted, and is supported in his opinion by Sir Godfrey Kneller) seem to be mistaken in supposing the shield to have been divided into equal compartments, each subject forming a separate picture, and occupying a sectorial space round the sun, moon, and constellations, which they supposed to have been embossed in the centre.

It is far more probable that Homer intended we should read the whole contents of the shield at a single view, and in its upright position, or, as it would appear,

when suspended on the arm of Achilles. The simplicity of Grecian art at this early period; its Egyptian derivation; the silence of Homer as to lines of demarcation; the absurdity and difficulty of contracting some of the subjects and enlarging others, so as to fill equal compartments, (which would have obliged the artist to diminish most the subjects of most importance,) and the necessity there would have been to turn round the shield in order to read it, all conspire to persuade us that the several subjects were represented on the same field, in the manner of what is now termed a bird's-eye view of an extensive country—the horizontal line of the sea being very high in the picture, and bounding the terrestrial part of the prospect. We have frequently seen Chinese porcelain, screens, &c. painted on this principle, with towns, capes, and various other objects jutting out from either side; and we have recently seen our own river Thames winding through this very metropolis and its environs, with other works of great merit, very scientifically represented on this principle by Mr. William Daniell.

"The indefatigable sun, the full-orb'd moon, the northern constellations, and the heavens," (or clouds) would, according to this supposition, occupy the segment, or arch, above the horizontal line, constituting the upper part of the shield; the *town in peace,* with its senate and assembly of the people, &c. and the *town in war,* with its ambuscade and battle, would fill the broader and more central part; the *agricultural employments* would follow successively in the order of the poem, while the *river,* which Homer mentions as mæandering through the scene, would help to keep its parts distinct, and the *dance,* which he has finished with great attention to the minutiæ, constituting the fore-ground, would fill the remainder of the shield—the whole being encircled (if it were a circle) with a simple waving line, such as is now very fashionable, and as frequently occurs on the Greek and Etruscan antiquities by way of border.

But the arts both of Phœnicia and Greece originated in Egypt. The same people

who imparted the rudiments of their religion and philosophy to the Greeks, placed in their hands those instruments of art, which, on account of their extreme simplicity even at present, can have undergone but little variation from the beginning. We have seen that with these they had made considerable advances towards excellence, even before the age of Homer: but with Homer and Nature for their archetype and guide, and with a system of heroic sentiment and poetical mythology to stimulate their exertions, they discovered and adopted such modes of study, as gradually enabled them to accomplish those works which have commanded and received the warm and genuine admiration of each succeeding age, in proportion to the correctness and refinement of its knowledge and taste. From the top of Parnassus, Homer pointed out those sublime paths which finally conducted Phidias to the highest summit of Olympus, and empowered the Grecian artists to legislate for ages the most distant and countries the most remote!

The complaints against the ruthless and unsparing hand of Time, should be hushed by the recollection, that twenty centuries have elapsed, and the supreme beauty of the Medicean Venus is still unimpaired; the divine majesty of the Apollo has firmly withstood the efforts of the destroying power, and even the more complicated pathos of the Laocoon exists nearly in its original perfection; while of those minute and exquisite cameo and intaglio engravings, where the richness and beauty of the materials, is only inferior to the skill of the artists, thousands may yet be seen with undiminished delight, in the classic cabinets of the Marlboroughs, the Carlisles, and the Townleys of every civilised country of Europe.

The earliest Greek engravings extant, are performed on scarabees, (which attest their Egyptian extraction,) and are in point of drawing, little better than the hieroglyphics: they shew, however, that Greek genius laboured already to extend the graphic art to portraits and historical subjects; which

is proved beyond all controversy, by the additions of the names of Tydeus, Achilles, &c. which are inscribed in the early Greek character on their respective gems.

In somewhat less than five centuries from the æra of Homer, though perhaps at a still earlier period, the art shone with a transient splendour, (which is pathetically lamented by Mr. Hayley) in Etruria. He thinks Etruria

> " Might have vied with Attica in art,
> Had she not fallen in her early bloom,
> The stript and mangled slave of barb'rous Rome."

And the collection of the antiquities of that country, deposited in our national museum by the late Sir William Hamilton,* are the strongest confirmation of the truth of Mr. Hayley's conjecture.

The father of Pythagoras the Wise, was a

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* Though many of these are since known to be Greek, some are undoubtedly Etruscan.

seal-engraver of this period, and is claimed by the Etruscans as their countryman; and soon after (between the fiftieth and sixtieth Olympiad) lived Theodore the Samian, who engraved a famous emerald ring for the tyrant Polycrates, and who has been confounded with a real or fictitious Theodore of much earlier date, the reputed inventor of the turning-lathe, and lock and key.

"That art is long and life is short," has been often repeated. It was still an hundred and fifty years before Greece attained that exalted perfection, which it has been the custom of those professional writers, who have chosen art for their subject, (and whom we may regard as travellers in a foreign country, intent only upon its wonders,) to speak of, as if it were the lofty summit of an Alpine mountain, scarcely accessible, and perfectly untenable; for, having attained this elevated station, art, they say, must necessarily decline. But it should rather be represented as resembling those vast and elevated plains of South America, replete with other than superfi-

cial riches, inexhaustible in the variety of their productions, and whose extent no eye can discern. To believe that the utmost hope of our studies is to appreciate merits that modern art must despair to rival, can have no beneficial consequence. It is not only more consolatory to artists, and more gratifying to man, but it has also been demonstrated to be more in accordance with truth and nature, to believe that Greece might have attained, (and that England may attain,) a more varied, if not a more exalted perfection in art, than we trace even in the inestimable remains of Grecian antiquity. To produce a continued or increasing effect, there must exist a continually-operating cause, tantamount to its production: if that cause be removed, the effect must cease, and it has been eloquently observed by a powerful and consummate artist and scholar, that, when the spirit of liberty forsook the public, grandeur had left the private mind of Greece. Subdued by Philip, the gods of Athens and Olympia migrated to Pella; and when Alexander became the representative of Jupiter,

we are not to wonder that rhetoric mimicked the thunders of oratory; that sophistry and metaphysic debate were substituted for that philosophy which had guided life, and that the grand taste which had dictated principle to art, began to give way to turgid hyperboles and the littlenesses of false refinement.

Lysippus, however, the first of gem-engravers, and the firm adherent of truth, who lived at this æra of adulation, nobly reproved Apelles for this instance of his flattery to Alexander, and Mr. Hayley has recorded the circumstance, and the general praise of Lysippus, in a style analogous to his subject. He says:

" Ever, Lysippus! be thy name rever'd,
By moral dignity of mind endear'd!
Glory, well pleas'd, thy double worth beheld,
The matchless artist by the man excell'd;
Thy upright spirit,——————
Scorning to favour impious pride's pretence,
Reprov'd thy friend Apelles, that he strove
To lavish lightning on a fancied Jove;
And to thy statue, rationally grand,
Gave the just weapon of a hero's hand.
Thy taste ador'd——————
TRUTH, as the fountain both of art and fame."

The decline of those virtues which operated to produce the perfection of the fine arts in Greece, may be dated from the time of Pericles; the decline of the arts themselves from that of Alexander. The retreat, however, of Athenian excellence, was firm, slow, intrepid, and tempered with conscious worth, like that of their brave ten thousand under Xenophon: like the ebbing ocean, it retired with majesty, continuing to the time of the Cæsars to roll back forms of surprising grandeur and inimitable beauty!

The retreat of liberty and the arts, made way for the successive conquests of Sicily and Macedonia, and the destruction of Corinth; and the sculptured heroes and deities, as well as the living artists of Greece, served to swell the military triumphs of the new mistress of the world: but the triumphs of mere brutal strength, when intellect is his victim, are the real disgrace of man; and since so many gems and other illustrious examples of excellence have descended to us, it may be said that Grecian

art, even in its minutest operations, has more permanently, as well as more honourably, triumphed in its turn, over the giant power and barbarian arms of its Roman conquerors.

It is well known that the fine arts never flourished in ancient Rome. Augustus was indebted for that portrait of himself which he used as a signet, to the exotic skill of Dioscorides, the power to execute which was denied to the palsied growth of the indigenous art of the country. Augustus, though blessed with the society, and aided by the powers, of Virgil and Horace, Mecænas and Ovid, and though ambitious of being esteemed the protector of talent, could not, as has been well observed, "raise a Lysippus out of Roman clay."

The delicate plants which Mecænas, and the rest of the tasteful critics of the Augustan age, had laudably transplanted to Rome, and endeavoured to cultivate; withered under the baleful influence of the adulation exacted by the successors of Augustus, or were

blasted by their tyranny. The sublime principles which taste and philosophy during the succession of so many centuries, had gradually elaborated from the system of nature and the elements of art, were superseded by the frigid and ignorant imitations, of men who wondered much, because they knew little, and were compelled by contemporary critics and collectors of Grecian art, to perceive, or at least to acknowledge the immense disparity between their own efforts, and the bright examples of Grecian excellence, which adorned the cabinets of the great: and while attention and criticism were dissipated in petty efforts to appreciate the degrees of Roman approximation to the great standards of the Greeks, emulation sunk in despair, or was overwhelmed by affectation and false refinement.

Mankind have so long been accustomed to bestow liberal applause upon their destroyers rather than their benefactors, that we may be allowed to dwell yet somewhat longer upon the philosophy of this part of

our subject. The fine arts, which, if cultivated and encouraged upon legitimate principles, might have perpetuated the power of Rome, obedient to the dictates of truth, have commemorated her disgrace with her triumphs. Those arts, whose energies alone could have checked or absorbed the ambition of her crazy and intoxicated tyrants, and the superfluous wealth of her aggrandized citizens, and thus have prevented, or at least have retarded, her ruin; from being too late and injudiciously attended to, became the flatterers of vanity, instead of the monitors of virtue. The decorations, the riches, and the defence of Syracuse, should have made Rome sensible; as the balance of *power*, which Providence has ordained shall preponderate with the arts, should make modern Europe sensible, that the increase of physical, as well as of moral strength, is always consequent to real improvement in art and science: that increase of strength was lost to the Roman people, and the degradation of the empire, followed or kept pace with the perversion of art.

Of the Roman gems engraven in the reign of Tiberius, which have since been found in the dark recesses of Caprea, I shall say nothing—but that they are, in more than one respect, too bad to be objects of our present attention.

That talent for art, which the taste and authority of Mecænas and Augustus had failed to produce, was not likely to be afterwards excited by the mere influence of fashion. The luxury of wearing both cameo and intaglio engravings set in rings, which began during the republic, went on increasing under the emperors, notwithstanding its excess was satirized by Juvenal. Profusion is not elegance; and Pliny says that the Romans *loaded* their fingers with princely fortunes. The same taste and the same profusion, gradually extended itself to the bracelets, ear-rings, clasps, &c. of the women's dresses, and to the helmets, breast-plates, sword-handles, scabbards, and even the saddles of the military; and the robes, gowns, and shoes of the wealthy and the great, were richly set and variegated with

engraved stones, while the larger cameos had their places in the cabinet-work and furniture of their houses; and thousands of gems set in gold and silver goblets and vases, glittered on the side boards of the opulent, or shone in the temples of the gods.

Even the poorer ranks caught a taste for engraved rings, and as they could not purchase fine stones, the mode of imitating or casting such in coloured glass was invented; which has been remarked as an important event in the history of engraved gems. Their colour and brilliancy were thus imitated, and the beauty of workmanship of the originals preserved with tolerable fidelity. These are now called ancient pastes; they are not unfrequently found in the vases of antiquity, and the art of casting them has been re-discovered, and is at this time exercised in great perfection by the ingenious Mr. Tassie, whose recent good fortune*

* When this discourse was first delivered, Mr. Tassie had just been declared the fortunate possessor of the Shakespear Gallery prize.

has diffused a general sentiment of pleasure among his friends and acquaintance.

We have now traced this art through the first cycle of its revolutions, guided chiefly by its own inherent light. Like the great source of light, the art of engraving arose in the East: its first faint dawnings were reflected in the Ganges, the Euphrates, and the Nile: the obelisks of Upper Egypt are its primæval beams, and the cavern temples of Isis and Osiris absorbed the radiance of its morning: it afterward shone successively in Persia, Etruria, and Phœnicia; and gilding Ionia and the Greek islands with unfading glory, passed through the constellation of Athens with a splendour so unspeakable, that the brightest emanations of Roman art grew dim and finally disappeared in its intensity!

If the plunder of vanquished Italy is even at this time operating a similar subjugation of taste and style on the art of our transmarine rivals; let us not triumph in what is not the honourable result of our own exertions:

let us rather reflect whether every age of art has not its appropriate pabulum, which may best continue its existence, and promote its growth. Let us pause ere we place nectar and ambrosia in the mental nursery—Let us study what is fit for ourselves.

LECTURE II.

Regret that history has neglected to record the invention of die-engraving—Value of coins as ancient records and as instruments of commerce—Numismatic arts not known to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Hebrews, nor early Greeks—The respective claims of Hindoostan, Lydia, and Egina, to this invention, stated—Symbols on Greek coins—That the art of die-engraving soon spread through Greece, but travelled from Lydia to Etruria, and thence to Rome—Conjectures on the coins of Etruria, and on the origin of alphabetic characters—Establishment of the Roman mint—Its excellence during the reign of Hadrian—Personification of our own island on the Roman money—Wishes that patriotic events might now be recorded on our coins—Genealogy of engraving—Of British engraving prior to, and in the time of, Alfred the Great—Antiquity of the practice of sealing in Hindoostan, and particular description of an ancient seal and copper-plate engraving found in digging near the bed of the Ganges—Of the ancient seals of Christendom—Testimony of Ingulphus—Of the seals of St.

Augustin, Edward the Confessor, and William the Conqueror—That English seals were anciently impressed on lead—and then on wax—Transition to engraved sepulchral monuments, which gave rise to engraving as it was practised in Europe on the discovery of printing.

LECTURE II.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IT was the chief object of my former discourse, to lay before you a succinct account of the rise, progress, and decline of the art of engraving, as it was practised among the most celebrated nations of antiquity, on gems, and other costly and durable materials. I have now to advert to another occasion, where Engraving employed her twofold power to multiply and perpetuate, perhaps with still greater advantage to society; and thence to trace her ameliorating progress through the dark ages that succeeded the downfal of the Roman empire.

Though battles and massacres have been detailed with the distressing accuracy of barbarians who delighted to anticipate that other barbarians would enjoy the bloody repast they had provided, it is unpleasing

to reflect that the progress of the arts of refinement has often been carelessly noticed as only of collateral and inferior importance, or has been altogether omitted by the ancient poets and historians. Modern literature has been more just to their merits: Addison has written expressly "on the usefulness of ancient medals," which is the subject immediately before us, and the lyre of Pope has sounded in its praise.

The invention of coining was not only a very curious and useful adaptation of the art of engraving to the purposes of society, but is an important event in the history of the world. Stamping impressions on medals and money, was a mode of printing the most eminently calculated to resist the attacks of time, and also a mode of circulating and transmitting information, the most certain, because itself constituted the woof that gave texture to commerce, and strength and extension to the bands of civil society. If Truth, therefore, be the basis of History, as surely it is, History must appear to have been peculiarly ungrateful to an art of

which it may be no hyperbole to say that it has contributed more than all other arts to the detection of remote error, and the verification of fact: for, notwithstanding these its extensive energies, and this its inestimable importance, it is not known when or in what country money first became the substitute for cattle, and unstamped bullion, as the general representative of property and the measure of value. The Egyptians do not appear to have had any, while they remained an independent people: none is mentioned in history, and none has been found in Egypt, excepting certain small thin pieces of unstamped gold, the supposed fares of the Stygian ferryman, in the mouths of the mummies; and even of this fact, though it be mentioned by Pinkerton, there is reason to doubt. The Assyrians, the ancient Hebrews, and even the Greeks of the age of Agamemnon, appear to have been equally ignorant of the art of coining money, and to have used cattle and bullion upon commercial occasions: from the time of Abraham's purchasing the cave of Machpelah, down to a very late period, the Scriptures

refer to the scales as a current test of the value of metals;* and Homer says the armour of Diomed† cost only nine oxen, while that which Glaucus generously gave in exchange for it cost an hundred.

Montesquieu says that the Lydians first found out the art of coining money. The wealth of their kings, and particularly of Crœsus, is still proverbial, and perhaps from this very circumstance: but Pinkerton,‡ who appears to have considered the subject attentively, is at last doubtful whether Lydia, or whether Egina, or any other of the free commercial cities of Greece, may claim the honour of the invention. His reasoning on the subject, as it throws light on the general progress of art, may not be unworthy of your notice. He says, there is great room to believe that coinage was invented in Lydia, though other na-

* Genesis, ch. 23.

† Iliad, Book VI.

‡ See his essay on medals, from which I have borrowed largely, and where the reader may still collect much valuable information on the subject.

tions had before this, used unstamped pieces of metal, and the small civic coins of gold, electrum, and silver, struck in Asia Minor, are perhaps some of the earliest, though, *if* we may judge from workmanship, these coins are so exquisite, that the coins of Greece, from their rudeness, appear to claim priority of era. In short, all other countries are out of the question, but whether Greece or Lydia first invented coinage seems dubious.

Now the Lydians were of the same origin with the Greeks, both being of Thrace; and it is not improbable, that with equal ingenuity, and a soil far more propitious, the Lydians were the real parents of many Grecian arts. The recollection that the Etruscans were a Lydian colony, appears strongly to confirm this supposition; yet I must add, that the rudeness of the engraving affords no solid, invariable criterion, either of the antiquity of the coin, or the general state of art in the country where it was struck; for while the coins of Sicily, and even those of the remote colony which

settled at Cyrene in Africa during the heroic ages, are engraven with exquisite skill, the Athenian coins of the same date are invariably ill executed, though Athens was at that time the centre of art and politeness.

On the whole, it is probable that the Lydians invented, and the Greeks very soon adopted, the art of engraving dies and stamping money. Its great and obvious commercial advantages, and the similarity of the reverses on the coins of both countries, which, (if I might indulge a conjecture on such a subject) appears to be intended to spare the trouble of weighing, by denoting the value of the coin, seem to countenance this opinion.

Of these early coins there are eleven on silver in the late Dr. Hunter's cabinet, and they are not uncommon elsewhere, bearing the tortoise, the badge of the Peloponnesus, in cameo, on one side, and on the other, those remarkable indented squares which correspond with the reverses of the Lydian money, and which, if they did not mark

the weight or standard goodness of the silver, were perhaps only the impression of a sort of small square anvil, grooved at right angles, so as to keep the bullet of silver steady beneath, and prevent it from slipping, while it was struck or stamped from above. The earliest of these coins have no legends or inscriptions on the squares, but it seems to have been soon perceived that the reverse, as well as the obverse, might be made to convey information, and on those which were struck soon after, where the tortoise is executed in a better style, a small dolphin is engraven on one of the indented squares, and on two of the others is an inscription of four Greek characters, which Mr. Pinkerton supposes an abbreviation of Egina; where, according to some authors, the first Greek money was struck, by Phidon king of the Argives. Phidon's reign is fixed by the Arundelian Marbles, which are themselves among the most celebrated and valuable of engraven records, at about eight centuries before the Christian era, or soon after the age of Homer.

Some have supposed that the art of engraving dies was known at a much earlier period in Hindoostan, and in the Numismatic collection now forming by the Honourable East-India Company, is a gold coin which was found among the treasures of Tippoo Sultân, to which the Hindoos paid a superstitious homage, and assigned an antiquity of upwards of four thousand years. It was understood to have been formerly dug up near the royal palace of Mysore; like some of the coins of our own Cunobelin, it is disked, but to a much greater depth; and within the concavity is the figure of Rama,* a sovereign and deity incarnate of the Hindoos, who is said to have reigned forty centuries ago. He is represented as seated on a throne, with his wife Seeta, and attended by Hunnoomaun, a sort of familiar spirit who accompanied Rama in the form of a monkey in his wars against

* The Hindoo's had at least three Ramas, the Bowman, the Plough-man, and the Hatchet-man, who were probably the authors, or introducers, of these several inventions.

Ceylon; and on each side of the throne are engraven three figures, holding the umbrella and the cowtail-fan, the emblems of Hindoo royalty.

On the reverse, or convex side of this curious coin or medal, is a horoscope, and in a very ancient Sanscreet character, the name *Nârâyana Pâla:* in all probability the horoscope and name of the sovereign in whose reign it was really struck. The whole is engraven in very low relief, and the two triangles which form the horoscope, are evidently done with a small flat scorper. Though it is in low relief, its concavity, its being of gold, and the veneration which has been paid this coin, has preserved its workmanship tolerably entire, and from a MS of Major Allen, which accompanied it from India, I learn that other coins, of the same kind, though not all impressed from the same die, have sometimes been seen in Hindoostan; but they are very rare, and like the penates or household-gods of most ancient nations, are revered

and decorated with flowers by their fortunate possessors.

The very learned superintendant of the Honourable Company's museum, however, by no means concurs in this opinion of the very remote antiquity of the Mysore coin, and thinks that others in the same collection are probably much older: these are also of gold, but in a style of art very superior to this, and somewhat resembling the early Greek.

It was the common policy, and is still the general custom, of the Orientals, to connect religion with royalty in the devices which they adopted for their money. Hence deities and sovereigns, either named or represented, commonly appear on the same coin. On one of these of which we are treating, is a figure which Mr. Wilkins supposes to be that of Rama the bowman, who was one of the Bacchuses of India, and who is represented standing with his bow, and attended by a mythological eagle, which bears a considerable resemblance to that on the standards of ancient Rome. An en-

throned deity sits on the reverse, holding the reins of government in one hand, and in the other a cornucopia, with his head surrounded by a halo or circle of glory.

On the whole, though there may be great room to conjecture, there is at present none to conclude, that the numismatic art is of Hindoo origin: but every information on this interesting subject may reasonably be hoped from the learning, zeal, and assiduity of those who now preside over the departments of oriental art and literature.

A coin once seen, particularly if attended with the rude and clumsy appearances of early contrivance, would suggest to an ingenious mind the means of its production. If, therefore, but a single Hindoo coin can now be produced, the date of which is unquestionably earlier than the first Greek or Lydian money, the honour of the invention should be awarded to India, and it would presumptively follow, that it travelled with

the precious stones from the Asiatic continent.

However this may have been, the frequent intercourse which then subsisted, soon spread the art of die-engraving through Greece, and each of her commercial cities learned to impress on its coins its respective symbol. Athens had an owl, Thessaly a horse, and Argos a wolf's head.* The same crescent which then shone on the coins of Byzantium still waves on the Turkish banner, and its adoption originated in the signal repulse of Philip of Macedon: Philip was about to storm Byzantium† on a cloudy night, when the moon suddenly shining out, disclosed his intention, and enabled the citizens to defeat his project. The moon, Hecate, or Diana, was hence venerated as the bearer of light, and preserver of Byzantium, and when the Turks possessed themselves of the city, ignorantly suspi-

* See Pinkerton on Medals, vol. i. p. 192, where many other ancient Greek symbols are mentioned.

† Historia Byzantina. Constantinopolis Christiana, lib. i. p. 7.

cious of lurking magic, they thought to propitiate its unknown powers, by assuming the symbol.

Montesquieu however argues, from Herodotus, and his own observation of the Pembroke cabinet, that the *earliest* Athenian coins bore the impression of the ox, which it originally represented in value, and Dr. Henry* says the earliest coins of all countries are embossed with the figures of the cattle for which they became the substitute as a current measure of value; he seems even to regard this circumstance as a test of the antiquity of coins: but as the use of unstamped bullion, the value of which must have been estimated by its weight and degree of purity, preceded the invention of coining, it is at least as rational to suppose that the inventors, or those who first availed themselves of this art, would be solicitous that the weight, and consequent value of money, should be known by inspection.

* Hist. of Great Britain, vol. i. p. 402, 403.

Many of these early Greek coins, which may still be seen in the cabinets of the curious, are beautifully executed, and in high relief; but, as I have already observed, notwithstanding the general superiority of Athenian art, the coins of Athens are a remarkable exception, exhibiting no better specimens of this supreme degree of excellence, than do the notes of the existing banks of Europe of the perfection of the modern art of engraving on copper. In this particular respect, therefore, as well as in many others, those who are entrusted with the direction of these important national concerns, are perfectly *Attic*—not that I should have mentioned this circumstance for the mere sake of introducing a *compliment*, though it be *well deserved;* but while these gentlemen, neglecting to avail themselves and their respective countries, of the talent and ingenuity which they might command, seem to wait for a miracle to preserve them from forgery, others may be allowed to think it *no miracle* if they are *not* preserved.

In order to account for this inferiority of

the Athenian coinage, it has been conjectured that the die-engravers of Athens were so much admired, and so anxiously sought for, abroad, that there were no good ones left at home: but, an artist who is conscious of possessing great powers, will rather employ those powers on imperishable materials, such as the costly oriental stones, than on works where the obliteration of his merit is in proportion to its usefulness, and where every day's friction, by impairing the beauty and delicacy of his execution, brings the most exalted talents nearer to the level of the meanest.

On the great artists of Athens, ever alive to posthumous glory, such sentiments as these must have had considerable influence, and if they found encouragement in gem-engraving, we need not be much surprised that they left the dies to those of inferior talent. Again, from the great number, and almost equally great variety, of Athenian coins now in existence, it would appear that their dies were of some soft metal, easily cut, and soon worn out, and that the

cheapest, and consequently worst, workmen, would on this account have been employed, even though the best had not been more agreeably and more reputably engaged. In short, die-engraving appears not to have been honoured at Athens as an art, but regarded merely as a common trade.*

The operation of coining was at that time performed† simply by the stroke of a ham-

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* I am here so powerfully reminded of the state of modern engraving in this country, that if my hopes, notwithstanding recent occurrences, were not stronger than my reasoning, I should say that the same fate is even now in operation, and will inevitably befal the art of engraving on copper, for principle is immutable. The present race of engravers, if they may claim that honour, are probably the last that will be honoured with the appellation of artists: mere manual dexterity and visual accuracy, will be substituted to the high mental requisites of the art, and the less enlightened part of posterity will view with surprise the wretched engravings that England will produce, long before the close of the nineteenth century.

† It is to this day performed in the same manner, and die-engraving, with the same clumsy facility, in such parts of the world as are not in a state of improvement. A friend of mine, who was collecting materials illustrative of the costume of India, visited the mint at Patna, and while he

mer, the die being cut on a sort of punch. Apparently there was more than one reverse engraven on the same piece of metal, and in the carelessness of hasty striking, the workmen sometimes let the bullion slip aside, in which cases we see, as is not uncommon on old coins, that the reverse and obverse have not coincided, and that with an incomplete reverse appears part of the curve of another: perhaps, too, the same row of reverses were not all of the same subject, and thence one source of the variety of the coins of Athens. It may also be worth remembering, that the bullion was not cut into cylindrical pieces, as is now the practice, but, as I have before intimated, each piece was of a spherical form, which accounts for the very high relief by which some of the coins and medals of antiquity are distinguished, and also for the cracked edges we so frequently observe in

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was making a drawing of the place, a die or punch was engraven, with the initials of his name, and twelve impressions were presented to him at his departure.

old coins, proceeding from the force of the blow which became requisite.

I conceive that in the ordinary course of ancient money-coining, a row of balls of bullion was hastily placed, and presumptively in a heated state,* in a row of matrices by one workman, another held the punch over them in quick succession, which a third struck with a large sledge-hammer.

The Lydian colony which settled in Etruria is supposed to have carried thither the art of coining, and to have communicated it to the Romans in the reign of Servius Tullus, or about four hundred and sixty years before the commencement of our æra. The early coins of both Etruria and Rome, are not struck with a hammer, but cast; nor are they of gold and silver, as the Greek, but of copper and brass, and

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* I am informed that Mr. R. P. Knight has a Sicilian coin, which exhibits the appearance of the metal having run, from being over-heated.

both are impressed with the rude figures of cattle, from whence the Latin term *pecunia* is derived.

On the reverses of those Etruscan coins whose obverse is an ox or a bull, is a device which has been thought to resemble the bones of a fish, and which has given rise to various opinions. Reflecting on this singular mark, and on Dr. Henry's general assertion,* I have been induced to *add*, though *not much*, to the numerous conjectures respecting it. I think it *may* have been intended to denote the fractional part of the value of an ox, for which it was current; because, though these coins are large and heavy, their material is only copper, which could not, as Montesquieu and Dr. Henry, if literally interpreted, would suggest, render them of equal value with an ox.

Again, Etruria at that time had no nu-

* That the earliest coins of all countries are marked with the figures of cattle.

merals: this mark may therefore have been used to denote the number of nails, or arrows, or some other simple and portable species of property, which had also been in use as money among the native inhabitants before the arrival of the Lydian colony, and for the value of which these pieces became current. Cattle could not have been used for the more trifling purchases in any country, without manifest inconvenience. No man would give an ox, or even a kid, for a hide or a basket. Property less valuable, or more portable and divisible in its nature, must therefore have been also in use as a circulating medium; and as salt is said to be thus used in Abyssinia, and cowries on the coast of Africa, so it is more than possible that nails and arrow-heads were occasionally used by the orientals as money, in their smaller purchases. The learned author of the "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations," who has amplified the inconvenience of using cattle as an instrument of commerce with his usual perspicacity, speaks of a village in Scotland, where, in his time, it was

not uncommon for workmen to carry nails, as money, to the baker's shop or the ale-house.

It is digressing from our proper subject, yet it may not be unworthy of collateral notice, that nails, or the heads of arrows, thus used as money by the aborigines of Assyria, (who had no coinage, though they had engravers) may possibly have been the remote origin of numerical, logographic, and finally of alphabetic characters. The present art of writing, or of transmitting thought by sound, and depicting sound by intricate combinations of abstract forms, though associated in infancy with little difficulty, is too vast and complicated for the human mind to have accomplished but by degrees. Perhaps three nails, or arrows, accidentally or designedly disposed in a triangle, or any other supposed form, might have suggested to some Babylonian genius, that the engraved representation of three nails thus combined, might be made to signify the basket or piece of pottery, to which they bore some resemblance in shape, and were

equivalent in value: the same genius would readily infer, that the same number of nails, when combined in some other form, a zig-zag, for example, might, upon the same principle, be made to denote some other commodity or article of traffic of equal value, and thus, the known value of a thing might become current, or represent in engraving or writing, as well as in commerce, the thing itself. It is true that these consequences could only result from mutual compact, and if any disagreement should happen between the parties concerned, it would give rise to such a confusion of written, though not of oral, language, as we read did actually take place about this time in the plain of Shinaar. But it is time to return from the obscurity of conjecture, to better authenticated facts.

On the coins of some of the cities and colonies of Greece, the art has transmitted many interesting and exquisite examples of beauty, and of the charms of their poetical mythology; but she learned the most useful application of her powers under Ro-

man auspices. Under Roman auspices she became the auxiliary of history, and learned to commemorate events; and to communicate the wisdom and the virtues, with the portraits, of the statesman, the hero, and the sage: but, under Roman auspices, she was also compelled to stoop and prostitute her powers in flattering the most unworthy of mankind. The Virtues appear without impropriety on the medals of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonines, but what shall we say to *Clemency* and *Moderation* being represented on the coins of Tiberius? or to the legend which states, that "while Commodus reigns, the world is blest?" Has adulation been so extremely abject? or have the conductors of the Roman coinage dared to be ironical under the most sanguinary and disgusting of tyrants?

The establishment of the Roman mint was on a scale corresponding with the importance of the empire. The engravers were respected, as conducing in the exercise of their art, both to the strength and ornament of the state, and were styled *Cæ-*

latores: those who assayed the bullion were called *Spectatores*, and the refiners *Cenarii.* Beside whom there were the *Fusarii,* or melters; the *Equatores Monetarum*, who adjusted the weight; the *Suppostores*, who put the pieces into the dies, and the *Malleatores*, who struck them.* At some time it should seem that other implements than hammers, were used by the Romans to strike their money. Bouteroue says, that in a grotto near Baiæ was a picture of the Roman mintage, where a machine was represented which upheld a large weight, seemingly with the intent that the coin should be impressed by its fall.

The best of the Roman medals, as well as gems, are the work of Greek artists: and the best dies were cut during the reign of Adrian, when genius, discouraged from her nobler flights, seemed for a while to have taken up her residence in the Roman mint.

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* Some other officers, who were appointed at different periods of the empire, are enumerated by Pinkerton, with his usual accuracy. See Essay on Medals, vol. i. p. 51. to 54.

The personification of our own island first appeared on the Roman imperial coins. On those of Claudius, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, Commodus, and Severus, the Britannias are numerous, and it is worthy of remark, that she appears in a style, and accompanied by attributes, which may appear to a native of this island, prophetic of her present grandeur and importance—seated on a globe, on a rock, or on the Grampian hills; or standing erect, her right hand resting on a rudder, with a ship's prow in the back-ground.

It has been the earnest wish of many distinguished characters, among whom we may recollect with advantage the names of Pope and Addison, and, if I heard aright, that of your lecturer on history, that this country would adopt the ancient practice of commemorating important events on the reverses of its coins. I do not see that any other than beneficial consequences, both to present and future times, could result from its adoption, and we have now

an engraver at the head of the mint, whose talents are fully adequate to the task.

Surely it would be not less gratifying to the statesman or the admiral, to see his great deeds interwoven with the vital threads of that commerce which they had promoted, than to anticipate what may be sculptured on his monument. The real *King's Arms* is the British thunder! and it might thus continue to reverberate through time and space, when it is either successfully wielded at the the mouth of the Nile, or launched on the Atlantic ocean. Warmed by such wishes, the muse of Mr. Pope breaks forth with more than her accustomed fervour.

> "Oh when shall Britain, conscious of her claim,
> Stand emulous of Greek and Roman fame?
> In living medals see her *wars* enrolled."

Pope was, however, very far from wishing that *only* victories should be thus recorded: he knew that a thousand battles might be rendered useless, or worse than useless, by a single thought of a man or woman of genius, and would have blushed

to have found it necessary to compare (their real advantage to society being the test) the discoveries of Locke, Bacon, or Sir Isaac Newton, with the most brilliant victories that were ever obtained. Had he lived in our time, he would probably have desired that a coin should be struck when Cooke returned from circumnavigating the globe; or when a tedious and destructive war was terminated by an honourable peace; or when Great Britain was politically united to Ireland; or when the Royal, British, or London Institutions were established. Genius in art, science, or literature, is more rare, as well as more intrinsically valuable, than in war: Garrick has well observed, that,

> ——————" we have thousands that fight;
> But one, only one, like our Shakespear can write :"

and if Pope has dwelt with less heroic effort, he has not dwelt with less obvious pleasure, upon the arts of adornment, than upon those of destruction. With the zeal of a poet and a philosopher, in which we may honestly join, he is desirous that the

verse and sculpture should bear an equal part,

" And art reflects its images *on art!*"

and the sincerity of his attachment to the union of patriotic with private virtue, is evinced by the conclusion of his epistle; where he is also desirous that a distinguished states man, who had shewn himself the common friend of art and man, should shine on the prest ore.

Not to occupy too much of your time and attention with numismatic concerns, I must here omit even a brief notice of the various exertions and vicissitudes which the civilized world has seen, of this very useful and interesting department of engraving, in order to approximate toward that which is more particularly the object of our discourses.

Of the art of engraving *so as to yield numerous impressions*, the intaglio gem-engraving of the ancients is the root, and die-sinking is the earliest scion. To follow the latter through all its various ramifications is not necessary on the present occasion,

neither do I profess to be qualified to speak critically of the productions of either of these arts; but to say thus much appeared indispensable in the view I had taken of this part of my subject, which is designed to exhibit a sort of genealogical succession of those causes and effects which have preceded and produced, that mode of sculpture performed by incision, which we now technically and specifically term ENGRAVING.

How early the art revived, or whether it was indigenous or transplanted, among the Celtic and Gothic nations, might be difficult to determine. The uncouth poetry and shapeless sculpture of those progenitors of modern Europe, are to be seen in almost every region of the globe, from Caucasus to the northern extremities of Siberia. Indeed, so interwoven are the elements of art with the nature of man, that it may be said there is scarcely a spot either in the old or new world, and scarcely an island in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, but exhibits efforts in engraving and the other arts of perpetuity, more or less rude or refined.

That it was rudely practised by our warlike ancestors from the earliest periods, is attested by that very intelligent antiquary and artist, the late Mr. Strutt; he says, that their instruments of war, and other remains found in the British and Saxon tumuli, frequently bear marks of the graver; and the numerous coins of Cunobelin, must satisfy every one of the existence of this species of engraving, as early as the reign of that monarch—the father of Caractacus.

After passing the distressing period of Roman and Danish ravages, the soul of an Englishman flutters with fond delight over the name and the memory of Alfred, and seems to hold dalliance with all that is dear to his loyal and patriotic feelings. "Under the protection of that excellent monarch," says Strutt, "the arts began to manifest themselves in a superior degree. He not not only encouraged such artists as were in England at the time, but invited others from abroad; and the works of the Anglo-Saxon goldsmiths, (the principal engravers of that day) were held in the highest esteem

upon the continent, as well as in their native country. The shrines and caskets which they made for the preservation of the reliques of saints and other pious purposes, are said to have been curiously wrought in gold, silver, and other metals; ornamented with precious stones, and engravings in so excellent a style as to excite the admiration of all who saw them." Mr. Strutt proceeds with an earnest wish that a sufficient number of specimens of the works of the artists of this early period could be procured, by which a complete judgment might be formed of the degree of perfection to which they had arrived. There is however, yet preserved in the museum at Oxford, a very valuable jewel, richly adorned with a kind of work resembling fillagree, in the midst of which is seen the half figure of a man, supposed to be St. Cuthbert; and the back of this curious remnant of antiquity is ornamented with foliage, very skilfully engraved. This jewel is known to have been made at the command of Alfred the Great, and was one of the very few articles he could have carried with him

when he retreated to the isle of Athelney, where it has since been found.*

Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, who died in the year 988, is mentioned by the early historians as an artist. He painted and worked in the precious metals, frequently adorning his works with images and letters which he engraved thereon. Osbern, his biographer, calls him the first of engravers; but it has been emphatically observed, that he who could add the title of saint to the name of Dunstan, would not hesitate to call him a Raphael in painting, or an Audran in engraving; and the specimen of his drawing preserved in the Bodleian library, leaves us little to regret in the entire loss of his engravings.

Since I had the honour of addressing you last year, it has been pointed out to me that I had then omitted all particular notice of the engraved metal seals or signets of the

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* Mr. Strutt has given a faithful representation of it, in the second volume of his Chronicle of England.

middle ages, and the revival or introduction of the practice of *sealing* in England. This is certainly no unimportant branch of the genealogical tree, and I shall hope to apologize for its not appearing then, by engrafting it now.

It is perhaps not totally unconnected with this revival, that the custom of ratifying grants of land by a seal, prevailed at a still earlier period in the peninsula of India, where not only the matrix of the seal, but the whole deed of transfer was also engraven, on a plate or tablet of metal. One of these, which is a grant of land, in the Sanscreet language, and now in the possession of the Right Hon. the Earl of Mansfield, has been inserted with an English translation by Mr. Wilkins, in the first volume of the Asiatic researches.* It is dated twenty-three years before the birth of Christ, and it is further remarkable, that the date is expressed in *Hindoo numerals*, which for the most part very much resemble the numerals at present in use.

* P. 123, &c.

Another of these grants, of nearly the same age, which is likewise engraven in (the Sanscreet language) on copper, and which the same oriental scholar has undertaken to translate, has a seal appendant, which seal is impressed on a ponderous lump of copper, and is attached to the deed itself by a massy ring of the same metal.

It appears to me, on a careful inspection, that this seal is not cast, (as had been supposed) but is struck, as coins are struck: but whether it be cast or struck, the matrix must have been an intaglio engraving, and of no mean workmanship. It exhibits a style of art similar, and not inferior, to the best of the present productions of the art of Hindoostan. It is in high relief, and, being bedded in the metal, in good preservation. Its subject is mythological;* its form a circle, of about ten inches in circumference, and the weight of the copper on which it is stamped, not less than four or five pounds.

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* Beside human figures and animals, it contains a Sanscreet legend, or inscription, of which the meaning is simply "the Illustrious Karna Dêva."

In apology for this particularity of description I must add, that at the time I wrote it, I did not expect to have been able to exhibit the seal and plates themselves, which, by favour of Mr. Neave of Wimpole-street, I am now enabled to do. They were presented to that gentleman by Merza Hazy, grandson of Shah Alum, the present emperor of Hindoostan, and were found in digging a foundation within the scite of the ancient fort of Benares, on the banks of the Ganges.

On the whole, this seal may be regarded as a highly interesting example of ancient Hindoo engraving, and is itself evidence, that at the time when it was executed, the art was very far from being in its infancy.

That the custom of sealing in Europe is derived from Hindoostan, I neither presume to assert nor deny. Those who may incline to the negative opinion, will yet perceive that these Hindoo grants connect themselves with our subject, as being the oldest engravings of that country, of which the exact date is ascertained, and as carrying back the existence of the art in India, to a

a more remote, but indefinite period. The existence of numerals in India a thousand years before they were known in Europe, is also remarkable; yet, notwithstanding these, and that the practice of sealing on lead was introduced into Europe about the same time as the numerals,* there is reason to suppose that sealing may have been derived immediately from the Romans, who, as well as the Greeks, are known to have been scrupulously observant of the custom of sealing their letters.

Pursuing this supposition, it would appear that some sparks of light were elicited from hostile collision; and that though Christianity and the northern nations had overthrown and buried the religion and the political institutions of ancient Rome in promiscuous ruin, engraved seals continued, where the least information remained, to be necessary to the ratification of legal transac-

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* Both sealing, and the nine numerals, which we are supposed to have obtained from the Arabs, may possibly have been brought from India by means of the Saracens.

tions, and the secrecy of written correspondence: they served alike to shelter ignorance, and to display or expose the inconsiderable remains of European taste and intelligence: he who could not subscribe his name, might affix his seal; and he who could, might shew his knowledge and his judgment, or the extent of his power, in the device he adopted, or was able to procure.

Of these seals, some were raked up from the ruins of departed greatness, others revealed the poverty of the talent of Christendom, and both descriptions attested the miserable state to which the knowledge of classic art and literature were reduced. Pepin* of France sealed with an Indian Bacchus, and Charlemagne† sometimes with

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* The reader will find this, with many other curious and valuable facts relative to ancient engraving, in Raspe's preface to Tassie's Catalogue.

† The seal of this brave and powerful prince, formed the pommel of his sword, and he was accustomed to say, "With the point I will support what I have sealed with the hilt."

a head of Jupiter Serapis, which it has been conjectured they mistook for St. Peter and St. Paul; and in Lewis's curious tract on the subject of ancient seals, is an account of an antique gem, which happening to contain *three* figures, was *christened* the Holy Trinity, and used as a seal.

It may be presumed, however, that many Christian gems remained in use, Clemens* of Alexandria having long before this period, and while the art of engraving on gems was still poorly practised, exhorted his fellow-labourers in the gospel to reject pagan and use religious symbols, such as the monogram of Jesus, a dove, a fish, an anchor, the ark of Noah, or the boat of St. Peter: of the latter subject Lewis has copied an impression, where St. Peter is represented in the act of drawing his net—a seal with which some of the early popes were accustomed to sanction their bulls.

The beautiful art of engraving on gems

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* Clemens lived about the close of the second century.

might be contemned by the ignorance, while money, and the means of issuing it, would be eagerly retained by the avarice and the ambition of those who had seized on the shattered fragments of the Western empire. A gem would have broken under the force necessary to impress it on metal, whilst iron or brass would receive and transmit the shock without injury: hence, while gem-engraving shrunk from the inclemency of the times, the hardier art of die-engraving remained—barbarised and debased indeed, but not extinct.

The Roman sealing-substance, and the art of engraving on gems, disappeared about the same time. What this substance was, I am not able precisely to say. It is described, not very intelligibly, as being "a kind of chalk or soft earth," which the Romans imported from Asia, and moistened with saliva, (as wafers are moistened at present) to receive the impression. It is not improbable that the means of obtaining this substance, or perhaps the knowledge of the substance itself, was lost in the darkness of

the middle ages, and no adequate substitute presenting itself, they had recourse to lead.

Lead is known to have been used in our own country, for the purpose of sealing, by St. Austin,* the monk, who lived at the close of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries: it is *supposed* to have been used one hundred and fifty years afterward by king Offa, and presumptively continued in use wherever sealing was practised in Europe, till about the beginning of the eleventh century.

I have purposely expressed myself with some doubt respecting the seal of Offa, because, though my Lord Coke has said that the chirograph or charter of King Offa,

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* W. de Thorne affirms that Austin the monk used to seal on lead, and that they had in the monastery named after him, a seal antiently belonging to some foreign bishop, inscribed *Sigillum protomartyris Stephani*, which may, without much hazard of mistake, be classed with the reliques of the day, as an instrument of pious fraud. Both these seals were presumptively brought from Rome.

whereby he granted Peter-pence* to support an English school at Rome, "doth yet remain *under seal*," yet Madox has denied this, and thinks *if* it could be seen, it would appear to be a forgery. That it was a forgery may be presumed, but has never yet been proved; and that it could be seen in Somner's time, is evident from a MS note of his in that copy of the first volume of Sir Henry Spelman's Councils, which belongs to the library of Christ-Church, Canterbury; wherein he has written that "Offa's charter is with the primate of Ireland," but Lewis, who gives this anecdote, adds, that Somner "does not say it is under a seal of wax, more probable it is that the seal is of lead, if there be any."

Ingulphus, the learned abbot of Croyland,

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* These Peter-pence were to be paid annually by every family in his kingdom whose yearly income was not less than thirty pence. I have read that Offa was born deaf, and lame, and blind: the number of kingly works that are ascribed to him, teach us rather to think that he had better ears, stronger limbs, and keener eyes, than his contemporaries.

(who had been a great traveller, and was secretary to William the Conqueror) says that the Normans, disliking the English manner of ratifying their chirographs, ordered them to be confirmed by impressions *on wax*, from the special seals of every one of the parties, and attested by witnesses. From his testimony it appears, that seals were by no means common in England. Probably, as invaders are generally unenlightened, this country was more deeply in the shades of ignorance than the rest of Europe, and the art of engraving them had scarcely dawned here before the time of Alfred. Ingulphus expressly says, that lands were *formerly* granted or disposed of without writing; sometimes by word of mouth; sometimes a turf of the land granted was laid with religious ceremony on the holy altar; and sometimes the lord gave to the tenant, a sword, bow, helmet, arrow, or drinking-horn,* to certify the transfer.

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* Lewis says, that a Mr. Pyssey of Berkshire, had in his possession a drinking-horn inscribed, "I King Knoute (Canute) have given thee this horn to hold thy land by."

Recollecting Alfred's jewel, which, with its curiously engraved setting, I have already mentioned, it would appear that the means of engraving metal seals could scarcely have been unknown here in the time of Ingulphus. Perhaps seals were sometimes used, though not impressed on *wax*. Dugdale has observed, that Edward the Confessor's charter to the Abbey of Westminster *is sealed,* " and is the first of the kind we have in this kingdom :" but as this prince is known to have received his education in Normandy, it is more than possible that he may have introduced, among other Norman usages, this of ratifying charters by a seal of *wax*.

The seal of William the Conqueror is still appendant to the charter by which he endowed Battle Abbey, and may be seen in the Cottonian Library. Its style of design and workmanship, as might be expected, is heraldic, graceless, and dry : its subject, a knight,* or more probably a duke, in

* Du Fresne says, that anciently in France noblemen acquired the privilege of sealing at the age of twenty-one,

compleat armour; with the king crowned, a sword in his right hand, and a globe surmounted by a cross in his left, on the reverse.

From this period, the use and sacredness of seals, went on increasing in the public estimation, so that by the time of Henry I. their devices, forms, and sizes, appropriated to the different ranks in society, were gradually settled—even the etiquette of sealing on different coloured waxes, was ascertained with sufficient scrupulosity.

I have examined the brass matrix of a seal which was used during the reign of that monarch, which is in good preservation, and now in the possession of the reverend and learned Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries. It is an intaglio of considerable depth, appears to be the work of some die-sinker of that period, and to have been

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at which time they were knighted, and that esquires did not obtain it till the year 1376, and when they were created knights altered their seals.

executed partly with gravers and scorpers, and partly with punching implements. It belonged to Walter de Banham sacrist of St. Edmundsbury, and represents the head of St. Edmund the king and martyr; a wolf; and a tree resembling an artichoke: but the head is larger than the wolf, and scarcely less than the tree, and the whole is surrounded by the rhyming motto *Ostendunt Signum, Rex Lupa Lignum,* with the name of Walter, or *Galteri*, placed between the rhyme. Its subject is taken from an incredible legendary tale respecting St. Edmund, which those who delight in such relations may read in Matthew of Westminster.*

I have not thought it necessary to pursue the inquiry into this mode of seal-engraving, through the stages of its progressive improvement. It continued, and still continues, to be performed with the same implements used in the same manner; or

* P. 165, edit. Francof. 1601.

at least with no other variations than have been produced by the gradual improvement of society operating on the peculiarities of individual talent; and the detail of its productions would probably afford little interest, but as they are connected with feudal and religious contests, and no further elucidation of *our subject.*

You will do engraving the justice to bear in remembrance, that I am here but urging my way through the chaos of the art, in order to arrive at the purer elements that lie beyond, and must be content to "tread the crude consistence, half flying, half on foot;" marking the spots of lucid capability, and labouring to render the least untractable of its materials, subservient to the means of passing it.

Soon after the conquest, says Mr. Strutt, (though, from other information, I think it must have been at the least two hundred and fifty years from that memorable æra) a new species of engraving, entirely different from the mingled work of the engraver,

goldsmith, and chaser, which had preceded it, was introduced into, or invented in, England, of which there is scarcely an old country church of any consequence but affords some curious specimens, and England more than any other nation in Europe.

The brass plates on our old sepulchral monuments are executed entirely with the graver, the shadows, where shadowing is attempted, being expressed by lines or strokes, strengthened in proportion to the required depth of shade, and occasionally crossed with other lines, a second, and in some instances a third time, precisely in the same manner as a copper-plate is engraven that is intended for printing. These engraved effigies are commonly found on those horizontal tombstones which form part of the pavement within the churches; and the feet of the congregation, which kept the lights bright by friction, filled the incisions with dust, and thus darkened the shades: very neat or exquisite workmanship is not therefore expected; yet some of them bear no small evidence of the

abilities of the monks, or other workmen by whom they were performed.

The art of engraving has served alike to enlighten the darkest and embellish the most enlightened periods of history. In the early Gothic, Gallic, and Saxon signets, it flung a faint ray of intelligence athwart the gloom of unlettered centuries. From the art of necessity has proceeded the *fine* art. The rough arm of labour has gradually submitted to the guidance of the delicate finger of taste. The beautiful engraving; the exquisite graces; the mental and manual ability, which we admire in the Battle of La Hogue, and the Diploma of the Royal Academy, are displayed principally with the same simple instrument, which cut the seals and sepulchral inscriptions of which we have been discoursing.

In this view of our subject it may therefore be said, that the kind of engraving that is more especially the object of these Lectures, has arisen from the tombs

of our ancestors.—But as we now approach the æra which must be regarded as the most memorable and interesting in the history of the art, I shall beg leave to pause, that we may enter upon the consideration of engraving as combined with the art of printing on paper, with refreshed attention, on a future evening.

LECTURE III.

Reasons for altering the Lecturer's former plan—Of technical terms—Definition and subdivision of Engraving—Of engraving on Wood—Of Vignettes—Of engraving on Copper—Of Etching—Of Mezzotinto scraping or engraving—Errors of a popular writer respecting it—Of Stippling or engraving to imitate chalk drawings, as it was practised by the early Italian masters, by De Marteau, and by Ryland—That the mistakes of Print-dealers respecting this mode of art, has retarded the progress of English engraving—Of Aquatinta as it was practised by St. Non and Le Prince—Of Mr. P. Sandby's improvements in aquatinta—Want of public discrimination between worthless and sterling engravings, regretted—That proposals for anonymous engravings should be discouraged on principle—Best rule of preference betweeen projected engravings to be derived from the known talents and reputations of the artists who are to perform them—Excellence of the machines invented to facilitate etching by Mr. Wilson Lowry—Of etching through Soft Ground and on Stone—Of the respective local energies of the

various modes of engraving—Of the terms General and Particular; Beautiful, Sublime and Picturesque—Of Count Goudt's print of the Aurora—Mis-use of the word Colour—Of Middle-tint—That Engraving is not an art of copying Painting, but affords the means of translating it—Error of colouring engravings—Reasons why stippled engravings when printed in colours, can rarely possess any value as works of art.

LECTURE III.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

BEFORE we proceed further with the historical progress of the art under our consideration, I have, on reflection, thought it would be an improvement of the course I pursued last year, to interpose, between my accounts of the ancient and modern modes of engraving, some explanation of the respective local powers and susceptibilities of those modern modes, and of such technical terms as appertain to the art, as it is exercised at present, and has been exercised for the last three hundred and fifty years: by which means I conceive, we shall keep what I have called the genealogy of the art more distinct than formerly, from the art itself—or from that branch of it which is intended to be more especially the subject of these Lectures.

Truth advances as error is made to recede. As error is never more stubborn than when backed by prejudice, I shall discourse also (and somewhat at large) on certain popular mistakes respecting this art, which prevail to a lamentable extent; which must be the source of much regret to professional engravers of merit, and the operation of which must considerably diminish both the pleasure and the profit it is capable of imparting to the public.

Lavoisier remarks, in the preface to his new system of Chemistry, that he found by reforming the nomenclature, he improved the science itself. If therefore we could render more clear and determinate the *Language*, we should necessarily elucidate the *Philosophy** of the art under consideration; and though I may have reason to think

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* Aware that this word originally meant the love of wisdom, it may not be unnecessary to apprize the reader that I here use it to denote *the science of connecting principles*, which, as nearly as I can ascertain, is its modern acceptation.

that want of learning, and want of the authority which is due to learning, do not entitle me to hope that permanent or extensive benefit will result from any efforts of mine, (which considerations will certainly induce me—at least for the present, to restrict those efforts from their full scope) it is still my duty to enable you, if I can, to refer the examples, I shall eventually have the honour of submitting to your notice, up to some general heads. The advantages that chemistry would have derived from isolated experiments, would have been comparatively trifling, but for the nomenclature which enables us to class their various phænomena; and it is the same with regard to engraving, for, as we have yet seen no Academy instituted for the acquirement and liberal communication of general truths in *this* art, what has hitherto been engraven, cannot be strictly and scientifically considered, as any other than the results of the isolated experiments of isolated individuals. Indeed, however much we may admire some of its productions, it is proper on such an occasion as the present,

that they should pass thus under our observation. No work of engraving is to be considered as *absolutely* perfect. As we *raise* our taste, its horizon will consequently widen; and the pigmy presumption of criticism is never more manifest, than when it dares to set limits to Art. Who shall say to an Art, "thus far shalt thou go, and *here* shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

I have been the rather induced to this alteration of my original plan, from perceiving that I should not be able to reach certain material points, in the chronological order which I have adopted, for a considerable time, and from its having been asserted by a gentleman who did me the honour of attending last season, that I then spoke of Engraving *as if* it were SCULPTURE, and had thus confounded two arts which are in themselves distinct and separate.

I feel a natural desire to be rightly and thoroughly understood, being aware that what I may have to say, will else be discreditable to myself and useless to others;

and though it will not be my practice, to occupy your time in combating the particular opinions of those individuals with whom I may not have the good fortune to agree; yet, combining this gentleman's remark, with another circumstance not irrelevant to the progress of Engraving, I have been led to think that some explanation may not be altogether unnecessary on the present occasion; and in this view I am thankful for a communication which I have no doubt has been made with the laudable intention of setting me right.

I have lately read over the printed abstract of a code of laws drawn up about forty years ago, for the regulation and government of our National Academy of Arts, and finding that in those laws the difference between the statuary's and the engraver's arts was marked with a hard and un-artist-like line, whilst their generic connexion was passed unnoticed, I hope I may be pardoned if I should suppose that there may possibly be some amongst this audience, who, like the gentleman to whom I have

already alluded, may have been led by academic authority into the habit of not adverting from the specific to the generic term, and consequently of supposing that engraving is *not* sculpture.

I would not be fastidious about words, or more precise than is necessary to the accomplishment of the purposes for which words are used: far less would I for a moment imagine that an art intrinsically valuable, could either derive additional value, or suffer depreciation in your esteem, from the term, or the occasional misuse of the term, by which it may be denoted: but correct definitions are certainly desirable; (where they can be had) and *Sculpture*, unless I am much mistaken, is a *generic* term, proper to the engraver's as well as the statuary's art, as comprehending both; just as the term *Art* comprehends in addition to these, Painting, Poetry, Music, and every mode of practically exhibiting refined mental operation, and is therefore applicable to either or all of them.

I trust you will agree with me, that it is right not to sacrifice to the *appearance* of delicacy, the *real benefits* of truth, nor to rely with too implicit faith upon the authority of distinguished names, in inquiries connected with the progress of Taste, Science, or Art: yet, in considering the definition of engraving, it appeared proper to remark how others (who from the nature of their studies might be expected to be more conversant with the kind of truth before us) regarded the respective meanings of the words in question, before I again submitted my opinion to your attention, and in referring to such, I found that most foreign languages expressly mark the generic verbal connexion as well as the actual practical relation, between Sculpture and Engraving: and that it is countenanced by the highest literary authorities in our own —I mean by Dr. Johnson and Dr. Swift.

Hence I am induced to re-assert, that ENGRAVING may be defined *a mode or species of* SCULPTURE—*performed by incision.*

Having hitherto discoursed in a general way on the various species of engraving, which were known to and practised by, the ancients; I now approach the modern modes, and purpose to discourse in my succeeding Lectures, more critically, upon that branch and those ramifications of the art, of which printing is the proper termination.

Engraving, is sometimes executed on Wood, in which case the ink is not delivered from the incisions, but impressed from the surface of the block by means of the same kind of press with which letter types are printed; and the work is performed with gravers varying in their shapes and sizes according to the required depth and breadth of the lines.

On the whole, the local powers and advantages of wood-engraving, appear to be somewhat mistaken. Vignettes are the fashion, and it is also the fashion to consider this art as calculated to rival that of engraving on copper. Both these fashions

appear to me to be unfortunate for the art of engraving on wood: for reasons which I shall endeavour to explain.

From the ornamental character of the Vine, the French word VIGNETTE, which (as is well known) literally signifies a young or little vine, has gradually obtained among us a figurative meaning.

Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, uses this word to denote the decorative shrubs that grow about ruined edifices: and, by parity of reasoning, the little engraved embellishments, with which books are sometimes ornamented, have been called vignettes.

As they are not supposed, like pictures terminated by a regular boundary or frame, to convey or suggest the idea of a certain historical transaction or portion of nature as it might appear through an aperture, so in composing them, artists have not thought themselves amenable to the same laws, but have often taken a wider scope of probability: Hence a vignette to a poem, is oft times

a sort of midsummer-night's dream, where Fancy, unrestrained by time and place, indulges in the revelry of fairy fiction:—But, whether it be the appendage to a poem, or a history, or a book of any other kind—whether its subject be a stern and stubborn fact; or a mere painter's reverie; the objects introduced should always be of a subordinate and accessory kind, and the main subject of the work should never be thus represented.

On an island among the Lakes of Killarney, is the remain of a small Saxon chapel, which hence become very properly the subject of a vignette to a book of which the topography of Killarney is the subject, and where the lakes themselves are introduced, not as vignettes, but as pictures, terminated by a regular boundary.—Hence too, not the story of Ruth and Boaz, but the furniture of an Oriental Harvest field, became a very proper subject for a vignette to the book of Ruth. A principal beauty in most vignettes, consists in the delicacy with which they appear to relieve from the white paper

on which they are printed. The objects of which vignettes consist, themselves forming the boundary of the composition, their extremities should for the most part be tenderly blended—be almost melted as it were into the paper, or ground. Now, in printing with the letter-press, the pressure is rather the strongest at the extremities of the engraving, where we wish it to be weakest, and it is so from the unavoidable swelling of the damp paper on which the impressions are worked, and the softness of the blankets in the tympans of the press. Hence, hard, instead of soft edges, are incident to vignettes engraven on wood, which all the care of the printer, with all the modern accuracy of his machine, can rarely avoid. A Nobleman, however, distinguished by his chemical and mechanical knowledge, and by his zeal for the improvement of society, is, as I understand, assiduously engaged in obviating these difficulties,* and removing

* Mr. M'Creery (the printer of these papers) has also conceived a plan for printing wood cuts with greater nicety than they are printed at present, which I hope will be found a real improvement.

these impediments, but until this be accomplished, the art should, in my opinion, be confined to such small works as do not require the delicacy of portrait, or of female character and expression, and be terminated by an oval, square, or some regular boundary.

The real advantages of wood engraving, are, that it is performed with more ease and celerity than engraving on copper, and that when so performed, the blocks may be fitted into the same frames, and printed with letter-types. If the wood engraver ape with difficulty those second and third courses of lines, (as the dark crossings are technically termed) or those delicate terminations, which are executed with comparative ease by the engraver on copper, though he may shew his skill, he must also expose his folly.—While he exhausts his strength in imperfect imitations of the graces of the superior art, he must subject himself to unfavourable comparisons, and will probably neglect the energies of which his own might be found susceptible.

For the higher efforts of the art, copper was soon discovered to be the more eligible material. Here the work was at first performed entirely by lines, or angular incisions, cut, or (as the Hebrew word more emphatically expresses) *ploughed,* with the graver—a steel instrument, whose general form and uses I should presume were too well known to need a description. These lines, it has since been found expedient to intermingle with others corroded by aquafortis, and occasionally with more delicate lines produced with a sharp steel instrument, held as a pencil is held, and which has been denominated a *dry* needle or dry *point*, in contradistinction to the (etching) point, whose use is followed by the operation of aquafortis. In printing copper-plate engravings, the ink is delivered from the incisions, and by means of the rolling-press.

Etching is the art of corroding with aquafortis, lines drawn with a stylus or steel point (commonly termed an etching-needle) on copper; or to speak more gene-

rally, is the superaddition of the chemical process of corrosion, to the art of drawing, through varnish, on plates of metal. The characteristic or local advantage of etching, is the unlimited freedom of which it is susceptible: the point meeting little resistance from the varnish, glides along the surface of the plate, and easily takes any turn that the taste of the artist may direct, or his hand accomplish, and hence its peculiar adaptation to the expression of that class of objects which it has lately been the fashion to call picturesque.

Various other modes of preparing copper-plates for printing, have, by assumption on the one side, and courtesy on the other, been denominated and allowed to be, modes of engraving, and though MEZZOTINTO is performed partly by *ex*cision or cutting off, I feel rather disposed to acquiesce in its claims, than to imitate my critic, by calling them in question.

In the process of Mezzotinto, the whole surface of the copper-plate is first worked

over with a toothed or serrated instrument of steel, which is rocked to and fro in various directions, so that if the plate were then to be printed, a mere blank or black space would be produced on the paper. After this mechanical operation (which is called laying *the ground)* the work of art commences, and is performed chiefly by means of scrapers of various shapes and dimensions, which are used to scrape away the surface or barb of the ground, in the necessary forms, until the requisite degrees of light and middle-tint are produced.

Mezzotinto is most properly employed on dark subjects where the constituent parts are large, its shadows being susceptible of great obscurity, profundity, and richness, particularly where the *mezzo* tint is cleared and enriched by the admixture of etched or engraved lines, as was the practice of White, and is the revived practice of Earlom and others ; it is however attended with this disadvantage, that in the lights, where the artist frequently wishes most to engage attention by irritating the sense of vision, it

is least capable of effecting it, the lights of mezzotinto where they occur in broad masses, being comparatively cold, poor, and spiritless.

In the only professed Essay on Prints, I believe, that this country has produced, mezzotinto is erroneously preferred to all other modes of engraving. The author says, that it "gives the strongest representation of the real surface.*" He does not inform us of the real surface of what, though he cannot mean that all surfaces are alike: —He says further that "nothing except paint can express flesh more naturally, or the flowing of hair," which is so gross a mis-perception (if I may be allowed such a word) of the respective local powers of the various modes of engraving, as one should imagine could hardly befal the dullest organs; and so palpable a derelection of the real capabilities of mezzotinto, as might half incline us to suspect it was rather ironically than ignorantly said—if

* See Gilpin on Prints, p. 38.

the doctrines inculcated throughout the essay, were not for the most part, equally vague and unsound.

Some of this author's more recent publications, are interspersed with excellent remarks—but, are also blotted with bad landscapes, and tarnished with false principles of Art. His aquatinted smearings, (fashionable though they have been) are as much beneath criticism, as his moral and christian virtues were above praise. Polished gold surrounds itself with splendour; and if base metal be placed near, it will deceitfully seem to possess a golden lustre and richness: I shall presume therefore, that no apology will be necessary for pointing out such of the mistakes of this writer,* as fall within the scope of my

* It is true, he published his Essay on Prints at a time when the engravers of this country were few, and wanted either talents, or encouragement, or opportunity, to impart their professional critical knowledge to the public. Mr. Burke has delicately apologised for this deficiency; and a laudable endeavour to supply it, might form an apology for

subject. The errors—the want of radical principles, in Gilpin's Essay on Prints, combined with the total want of such academical cultivation of engraving as might either impart critical information to the public, or practical improvement to its professors, were my chief inducements for undertaking these lectures, and would have been my excuse if I had failed, or had not met with such unequivocal testimonies of the approbation of the judicious, as are highly gratifying to my feelings.—But to return from this digression.

STIPPLING is a mode of producing prints by means of combinations of dots, which are either round or multangular, as the conical point, or point of the graver, is employed to form them. Stippling with the graver, was occasionally practised both by Martin Schoen and Albert Durer, in the very infancy of the art: the latter employed it in imitating the texture of beaver

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the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, if his books upon Art in general had not too much the air of the old fable of a man shewing a lion the picture of a man killing a lion.

hats, and other similar objects. Perceiving that it was peculiarly expressive of softness, Agostino Veneziano,* and Boulanger, sometimes stippled their flesh, and Julio Campagnola his back-grounds also. Almost a century afterward, it was observed by De Marteau that by etching some of the dots and engraving others, very successful imitations of drawings hatched with chalk, might be produced; and hence it has been called the CHALK *manner* of engraving.

In England, the chalk manner is new, having been imported from Paris not many years ago,† by Ryland, who employed it so as rather to imitate such drawings as are done with crayons, or *stumped*, than such as are *hatched* with chalk. It was run after, however, with avidity by the pub-

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* The works of Agostino de Musis, better known by the surname Veneziano, are very scarce, but among them will be found a small plate of an old man seated on a bank, with a cottage in the back ground, where the face of the figure is entirely stippled with the graver. He did not however, employ this mode of working in more than one or two other instances, and these I have never seen. In the flesh of Boulanger stippling is very common.

† About fifty.

lic, chiefly because it *was* new, for it was but a sort of retrograde and degenerate novelty as it was practised by the immediate imitators of Ryland. Yet, with so much heedless anxiety was it pursued, that people never stopt to consider whether even red-chalk or stumped drawings themselves (of which these prints were professed imitations) were so good representations of nature, or afforded a more happy and efficient means of transfusing the soul of painting, than the art of engraving in lines, as it was then exercised by Bartolozzi, Vivares, Woollett, and Strange, who were all living at the time, but—Ryland and novelty led the way, and fashion and Bartolozzi followed.

Perhaps Bartolozzi perceived that this stippling mode of engraving, was capable of more easily bestowing that soft blending and infantile indefinity, which are conspicuous in his style;—perhaps he recollected the fate of Milton, Corregio, and Collins, and saw that the existing state of the public taste, would neither appreciate nor reward the solitary efforts of a line-engraver who should regu-

late his aims by exalted views of the perfectibility of his art; and perhaps he knew that in executing his plates in the chalk manner, he could much sooner avail himself of the assistance of his pupils than in the more arduous practice of engraving in lines, and thus perform more rapidly the numerous commissions of the print dealers. However this may have been, certain it is that he bowed down his great abilities, and made a willing or a reluctant sacrifice of principle on the altar of fashion: an aberration which persons of real taste have not ceased to regret.

The print dealers* upon mistaken notions of private advantage, are ever exhausting the permanent hopes of the art: they are always ready, like Mr. Windham's savage, to cut down the tree in order to obtain its fruit. The novelty of chalk-engraving, by calling forth their ignorant exertions, co-

* The reader's mind will readily suggest to him that there are exceptions to this, as to all other general assertions. The author will hope to see the day when the exceptions shall be more numerous.

incided with, and increased this mania of the public, and except for the landscapes of Vivares, Rooker, and Woollett, which required and exhibited, more vigour and more detail of drawing than stippling could bestow; and that now and then an historical engraving by Strange and Bartolozzi, and the series from Mr. West's History of England, (of which the death of General Wolfe was the first) attested the existence and maintained the dignity of the legitimate art—with these illustrious exceptions, I say, the engravers of Great Britain were compelled to feel and silently to acknowledge, that since "ignorance was bliss, 'twas folly to be wise."

For myself,—though very young at the time, I could not help seeing with concern, that this re-discovery of, and rage for dotting, had happened at a most unfortunate period for the progress of engraving: It seemed to me as if a premature dotage had overtaken its manly prime. It has since turned out to be only one of those diseases which arise from the redundancy of particular

humours—a sort of influenza, for which (if my opinion of Academies* be right) the Royal Academy of Arts should have provided a remedy, but which the natural vigour of the constitution of Engraving has since overcome.

The dealers in fashionable articles, may be compared to dogs, that after a longer or a shorter chase, generally hunt their game to death. The Royal Academy had cleared no roads, and set up no directing posts, and even those among the well-intending public who were fondest of the sport—following these hounds, lost their way in the intricate and desultory chase. As at the Easter hunt, some stop short, others are thrown from their hobbies, and others again follow the dogs to the last—so it has been with regard to the fashion of engraving so as to imitate chalk or crayon drawings. At length, however, this interesting art (of which, if I *seem*, I *only* seem to make sport) fetching a few noble

* The reader will find that opinion more amply declared in the concluding Lecture.

bounds, has escaped from the toils of its pursuers, and now roves at leisure, when, as a means of translating pictures, it is more worthy than ever of being pursued.*

Upon what principles I am led to perceive that this province of engraving has

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* In a pamphlet lately printed, under the signature of Mr. Josiah Boydell, which professes to contain "a Plan for the encouragement of Arts," &c. (which is in my opinion, one of the most radically defective plans ever attempted to be obtruded on the public, and founded in such gross mistake, that it might with more propriety be termed a Plan for the *dis*couragement of the Arts) we find Mr. Boydell very free in reprobating the "dotting manner," and in censuring the public for their bad taste in engraving. In speaking of the different modes of engraving, his pamphlet might have sparkled with a little useful light, if he had been able and willing to have enlightened his readers on the subject: Yet, he gives no *reasons* why one manner of engraving is to be preferred to another: nor endeavours to inform, nor to *re*form the Public Taste, but by reproaching that public with having been "the promoters of such publications," as he now affects to contemn, i. e. such as are engraven in the manner of his own Shakespear. He seems to expect that we should now believe *line*-engraving to be the superior art, for no other reason than he formerly expected or wished us to believe that *chalk*-engraving was so. Upon venturing some years ago, to speak in favour of engraving in *lines*, at the Shakespear

recently disclosed more various and extensive, and richer tracts than it was formerly known to contain, I shall have the pleasure to explain at another time.* At present

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Gallery, I was told, by a person related to the present Alderman, that, compared with the mode of engraving of which he now finds it expedient to speak as above, "line-engraving was but an inferior art—a kind of *tattooing*, which was going fast out of fashion,"——and this was spoken as if *fashion* were known and acknowledged to be the arbiter of Art.

The truth now appears to be, that the conductors of the Shakespear kept the dotting manner *in fashion* as long as they could, (let the larger engravings for Boydell's Shakespear contradict me, if I am wrong) for reasons which he himself divulges in the pamphlet before me, namely—because "the difference both as to time and expense is as three to one," and because they therefore found it "answer to the publisher," and that now the public taste is emancipating itself from the slavery of fashion, and that Messrs. Boydell and Co. find themselves in danger of being left in the minority, they are endeavouring to accommodate their principles (if such motives may be called principles) to the change.—Thus verifying the position I have laid down in another discourse, that to follow, flatter, and degrade, not to lead, exalt, and refine, the Public Taste, is the constant object of these mock *Mæcenates* of modern engraving—at least the constant tendency of their *profitable* endeavours.

* I had not at this time the smallest suspicion that the

we proceed with our detail of the various species into which the art has been divided.

About the same time with chalk-engraving, the mode of etching in AQUATINTA was introduced into England by Mr. P. Sandby. An etching in aquatinta, if the granulation employed be very minute, will, of consequence, very much resemble a drawing washed with bistre or Indian ink, being performed, in as far as it is a work of art, with the same implement (namely, a hair pencil) used in the same manner; and as Faust sold his first printed Bibles for MS; so it is said that the early aquatinta works of Le Prince (who for some time kept his process secret) were believed to *be* drawings.

In printing Aquatinta, the ink is delivered from a corroded granulated ground,

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explanation here proposed would—I should scarcely have thought it *could* have been prevented. The mandate of the managers (of the Royal Institution) has *powerfully* reminded me of the uncertainty of human events.

the art of producing which, was invented by the French Abbe St. Non, and communicated by him to his countryman Le Prince. St. Non produced his grain by sifting powdered resin over a plate of copper, and fixing it by a slight degree of heat; Le Prince, at first, by the same process, but afterward by forming his plates partly of copper and partly of some metal less rapidly soluble in aquafortis; but our own countryman Mr. Sandby made a very considerable improvement upon both, by floating his copper-plate with a solution of Gum resin in highly rectified spirit: as the spirit evaporates, the resin cracks, but adheres to the copper in small nodules, between the minute interstices of which, the aquafortis is admitted, and corrodes the plate: and the professional powers which this gentleman previously possessed, enabled him to perform much larger and better works in aquatinta, than had hitherto been produced, the superior merit of which, the print before you will sufficiently testify.

Dr. Rees's Cyclopedia adds to its good

practical directions for etching in aquatinta, that " it is a species of engraving, simple and expeditious, if every thing goes on well; but it is very precarious, and the errors which are made, are rectified with great difficulty," yet it appears to me that the obstacles which have opposed themselves to the perfection of this species of art, are entirely within the reach of ingenuity and exact attention to phenomena, to remove. When the artist shall be able to command his various *grains* and degrees of light and shade, both in flat breadths and regular degraduation, without harshness or other imperfection; aquatinta will be a superior mode of art to that of drawing in bistre or Indian ink, because it will add to all the excellences of which they are susceptible, a variety of granulation of which they are not susceptible; and when this variety shall be capable of being graduated and blended at pleasure, and when its compass shall be ascertained, it may receive the perfection of harmony.

One very frequent defect is observable

where the aquatint is thrown over an etched outline which is corroded to any considerable depth: here the resin does not granulate along the edges of the line which has been previously *bit in,* as it does in the blank spaces, and hence a white edge remains on either side the outline when printed, which mars the advantages we should else derive from their mixture.

I have been led to assert that these obstacles are not insurmountable, from observing that these desirable graduations are sometimes produced, and these white* edgings avoided; and though this is said to be *fortunately*, or *happily,* or *accidentally* done, we should not be induced to forget that causes and effects do not vary, and that in all cases of this kind, where we are so ready

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* It was formerly the custom, after floating the plate with the solution, to leave it awhile in a slanting position to drain and to harden: it has recently been observed, that if the plate be left to dry in an horizontal instead of a sloping direction, the white edges do not occur.—Of this I have been informed since I read the discourse.

speak of *accident*, it is not Nature nods, but we that dream.

It has been a real misfortune to this species of etching, that it has been taught and spoken of, as if it were a kind of legerdemain trick. Every booby who could hold a pencil and pour gum and spirit over a plate of copper, has congratulated himself on possessing *the Secret*, and (which is much worse) many have succeeded to a considerable extent in teaching the credulous part of the public, to believe them *Aquatinta Engravers*. Hence, and from its comparative celerity of execution, while the art is brought into discredit, and Europe is deluged with worthless productions, every legitimate artist who endeavours to blend a portion of his own fame with the deeds of heroism that are daily acting around him, is sure to be anticipated in the *subject* of his work by twenty contemptible aquatintas.

It were sincerely to be wished, that upon such occasions people would repress their eagerness to obtain these interesting memo-

rials, by recollecting an old adage which I need not repeat, and would regulate their choice by reflecting how few can be capable of doing justice to the great achievements of a Wolfe, or a Nelson. It is a condition of human nature, that high intellectual attainment is arduous and slow in its progress, while ephemeral productions are generally trivial and vapid—as if it were ordained, that the duration and importance of works of art, should bear a certain proportion to the mental and manual skill which must be exerted in their production.

He who wishes to possess *the best* representation of the mournful victory of Trafalgar, must not expect it will be the *first*.* And why should he? Is it a baby toy, that he should be impatient to possess it? —Can he fear that the laurels of NELSON will wither round his tomb?—Or does he imagine that patriotism will not long continue to—" dwell a weeping Hermit there?"

Of freedom, our misgiving sense must

* This Lecture was delivered in 1805.

take the apparent evil with the real good. Few possess the power, and no man may monopolize the right, of consecrating the memory of the brave. The artist of high endowment who hopes to float down the stream of time with Nelson, must allow, and will be willing to allow, the same liberty to others, with regard to choice of subject, as he claims for himself. It remains, and ought to remain, with the public, to compare and discriminate between their respective pretensions: to encourage the legitimate artist, and discountenance the empirical pretender.

I should but ill promote the purpose for which I am placed before you, were I from any mistaken motive of delicacy, to forbear to use my best endeavours (feeble as those endeavours may be) to lay before you such principles of sound criticism as may assist your choice, so that when you see and compare engravings, your preference may be just.—If you subscribe to (with the liberal view of encouraging in their progress) works which you do *not see*, you can make your election on no surer ground

than the known talents and reputations of the artists who are to execute such works: But a species of imposture with which the world was heretofore unacquainted, has of late boldly stepped forward in the public prints, which is so infatuated with the past favours of the public, that it unblushingly presumes you will encourage projected Engravings, for the sake of the shopkeeper who is to sell them, and who bespeaks your patronage while he aims at hood-winking your judgment, by advertising *his intention to publish* such or such works.* It is my duty to say, that if you *do* subscribe your money upon this principle, I trust it will be only to such shopkeepers as have not compromised their real interests by the publi-

* This is generally done with studied ambiguity, so as to leave it undetermined, and to inculcate that it is of no importance, *who* is to be the writer, painter, or engraver of the work proposed: Or at other times (if the reader is able to conceive any distinct impression from the advertisement) he is led to believe that the publisher is himself to be the author. I conceive the above to be one of the passages which has induced those who might apply it to themselves, to solicit, and—*obtain!* my dismissal from the Lecture-room of the Royal Institution.

cation of bad prints: but I trust also to the broader principle that the good sense of the public will repel this and every attempt to wrest* the reputation of works of art, out of the hands of their real authors, I hope that no *artist* will sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage, and I wish that print-sellers may in future be content to move in their proper orbit, and be satisfied with the profits, which are very considerable, that arise from the sale of engravings.

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* "Sejanus, Wolsey, hurt not honest Fleury,
But well may put *some* statesmen in a *a fury*."

The impudent (I must call it so) practice of advertising anonymous works of Art, is an evil which ought not to be tolerated. I speak against it on principle, and from the firmest conviction of its destructive tendency. Nor do I fear that persons of any reflection will impute it to me, if an anonymous life and an anonymous death of Lord Nelson, were at this time advertising in the daily prints, to be published by subscription; or that more than six persons will be found, who will think that I ought on that account to have forborne to state the principle.—Even the first Nobility in the kingdom, when they condescend to allow their names to appear as the patrons of Oratorios and Concerts, never dispense with those of the professional artists who are to perform them: they have too much respect for Art and for the public, and too much regard for propriety.

The next mode of Engraving that solicits our attention, is that invented about fifteen years since, by Mr. Wilson Lowry. It consists of two instruments, one for etching successive lines, either equidistant, or in just graduation from being wide apart to the nearest approximation, *ad infinitum,* and another, more recently constructed, for striking eliptical, parabolical and hyperbolical curves, and in general all those lines which geometricians call *mechanical curves*, from the dimensions of the point of a needle, to an extent of five feet.—Both these inventions combine elegance with utility, and both are of high value as auxiliaries of the imitative part of engraving: but as the auxiliaries of chemical, agricultural, and mechanical science, they are of incalculable advantage. The accuracy of their operation, as far as human sense, aided by the magnifying powers of glasses, enables us to say so, is perfect; and I need not attempt to describe to you the advantages that must result to the whole cycle of Science, from mathematical accuracy.—As long as this Institution, and the Society for the encouragement of arts, manufactures, and com-

merce, shall deserve and receive the gratitude of the country, so long must the inventor of these instruments be considered as a benefactor to the public.

Another species of Etching, which perhaps in the order of time, should have preceded Mr. Lowry's, and which has been occasionally practised with considerable success, is executed with a black-lead pencil. Common etching ground is softened and attempered to the existing state of the weather, by the admixture of animal oil, and over a plate thinly covered with this sort of varnish, and smoked until it has become black, the artist cautiously spreads a sheet of very thin paper, and performs his etching, simply by making a hatched drawing with his lead pencil, on this paper; which being afterward taken from the plate, and aquafortis applied, the process is completed: as much of the varnish as it was necessary to remove, in order to admit the aquafortis to the copper, will be found to have adhered to the back of the paper, which (presuming the plate to be judici-

ously corroded) will exhibit the exact archetype of the print.

An art of producing prints from drawings hatched with lines on calcareous substances, has been recently discovered, of which it is my duty to state what I conceive to be the local energies and proper employment: in doing which, I find myself obliged to warn the patrons of merit in the fine arts, not to suffer their judgments to be led astray by the false lights of a specious prospectus, and a novel invention. The STONE-ETCHING is calculated, perhaps beyond any art at present known, to render a faithful fac-simile of a painter's sketch. It is an accession to that sketch itself, if the artist choose to sketch on stone, of the power of multiplying itself to any* number that may be required. I must at the same time remark to you, that it is *not* the painter's *sketches*, that it is most desirable to multiply, but his *finished performances*.

* This is what we are taught to believe, and what I am neither prepared nor disposed to deny.

We wish most to see the mercury of his active imagination, amalgamated with the sterling gold of his cultivated understanding; and we justly value an art of engraving in proportion as it is capable of rendering or reproducing the pure forms into which this rich mass may be moulded.

There are certain local energies peculiar to every branch of engraving. He who should endeavour in mezzotinto or the chalk-manner, to rival the playful freedom and Virgilian taste displayed in the trees of Vivares, would find himself as much mistaken in his aims, as he who on stone, should attempt to render the delicate blandishments, or produce a complete abstract of the full harmony, of Corregio or Claude. On the other hand, stone-etching is far more capable of producing a faithful transcript of a slight drawing hatched with chalk or lead pencil, than the powers of the graver and aquafortis united, on copper. Both this and the mode of etching through soft ground, afford the most efficient means of multiplying *such drawings:* This is the

boundary of their aim, and in this (when the artist is master of his process) they are compleatly successful.

But, though we may view the Pegasean flights of the unbridled fancy of Gainsborough, Wilson, or Mortimer, with the same kind of pleasure that Dr. Johnson affords us in commenting on the first thoughts (which I may call the rude sketches) of Pope, yet it is from contemplating the finished works of this poet, and of these painters, that we derive the solid and permanent gratification of Sense, Imagination and Judgment united, which it is the true aim of superior Art to produce.

Sir Joshua Reynolds says that "we are to consider rules as fences, to be placed where trespass is expected, and enforced in proportion as peculiar faults are prevalent at the time in which they are delivered; for what it may be proper strongly to recommend or enforce in one age, may not with equal propriety be so much laboured in another." The fashion of the present day

runs in favour of slight, sketchy performances. The Rev. Mr. Gilpin's principles of art obtained a too ready admission within the higher circles, because they were easy, and flattered the vanities of those who with little effort could acquire a certain ignorant rambling of the hand and the pencil, with an opinion that they could draw. With this they were content: a sketch was with Mr. Gilpin the mental part of the art, and hence it became an object to exhibit it disencumbered of its corporeal clay: but with due submission to metaphysical authorities, while we are in this mortal state, body without soul, or soul without body, are equally anomalous to our natures. The stiff, dry, laborious, tasteless attention to minutiæ, which characterises the infancy of art, (particularly of German engraving) and the modern, fashionable mode, of blotting and smearing a mere general effect, are equally unadapted to our sublunary state. The perfection of Engraving—as of all other imitative arts, will, if I mistake not, be found to consist of the highest and most complete union of *general* with *particular* nature;

and this, I may venture to prophesy, will be the fashion at some future day, which may not be far distant—or rather, when we are tired of the erratic proceedings of fashion, we shall return to the paths of nature and principle.

[The third Discourse concluded in this place; having been divided into two readings for the sake of not fatiguing the attention of my auditors, by detaining them longer than the hour they are accustomed to attend in the Lecture-room: but, as the same motive does not now exist, I hope the reader will not be displeased to find a fragment of what was originally the fourth, added to the third Lecture.—I have thought it would be an improved arrangement of my materials, not to separate those observations which relate to the two principal causes that have retarded the progress of British Engraving, and which will accordingly be found incorporated in the last Discourse of the present volume.]

I HAVE not found it expedient, nor indeed practicable, to limit my explanations of technical terms, to such as are peculiar and confined to Engraving:—for, having to trace the relation it bears to other arts,

we shall have occasion for some terms that are common to all, and such of these as I can anticipate, it will not be improper to define.

In attending to this part of my task, I shall endeavour to trench as little as possible upon the departments of other Lecturers—not only for the reason which the Professor Fuseli has given in the commencement of his Academical Discourses—namely, "that my vocabulary of technic expression may not clash with the dictionary of my audience," but also because, among the Metaphysics of art, where so many have stumbled, it behoves me to step with caution.

Toward the close of my last discourse (on the several species of modern Engraving) I found myself obliged to anticipate that the meanings I annex respectively to the words *General* and *Particular*, as applied to works of Art, would not be misunderstood: an anticipation of some terms is

not easily avoidable, and can be no reason why they should not be subsequently explained.

To PARTICULARISE, is to be attentive to the minutiæ, severally considered, of the object or objects before us. In imitative art, it is to represent those objects in detail. —In explaining the term *Generalising*, as it is less well understood, I shall be obliged to be more diffuse.

To GENERALISE, is not to render vague and indeterminate, but to express with sufficient firmness, what is common to a number of objects of the same class. A general idea—*if* the word idea may be used to signify any other than recalled and particular sensation, is a *generic* idea, and a general representation or description, in Painting or in Poetry, is also generic—or *such* a representation as is common to a number. In Moral Philosophy, general ideas being comparatively vague and indeterminable, have sometimes been denied to exist; but in Art, they may be rendered obvious—may be

returned back to the sense from whose particular impressions they are constituted or abstracted: and this, I believe, is practicable in all arts, though perhaps not in the same degree. The Statuary, the Poet, the Painter, the Engraver, the Musician—all who aspire to touch with pure delight the imaginations of others—all Generalise, and without generalising, it may be questioned whether any have attained to high and lasting reputation.

Great mistakes have arisen in the philosophy of Art, (if not in the philosophy of morals) from confounding a *general*, *abstract*, or *common* idea or representation, with a *vague* idea or representation. Now, with respect to art, the difference is very important—amounting in our critical reasonings, to as much as the difference between a bust chiselled in the rough, and a finished head of an angel or deity:—a Jesus Christ, for example, can only be exalted above all individual men, by possessing what is *common* to all *good men* in character and expression.

Permit me then to repeat, that a general *representation*, is *not* a vague, but a *generic* representation: not a representation of what is hastily seen or carelessly noticed and imperfectly recognised, but a firm representation of what is most frequently seen.—What is most frequently seen, is best remembered; what is common to a species or a genus is more frequently seen than that which is peculiar to an individual, and hence we recollect the general character of Man or Woman; or of the Oak or the Ash, when they are well painted or engraven, more strongly than we recollect in all their details, any particular man or woman, oak or ash, we have seen.

To Generalise, is therefore to define broadly or comprehensively; and every comprehensive definition, such as is proper in a Dictionary, must be of this kind: Languages, like the imitative arts, being modes of imparting information by exhibiting principled combinations of thought.

In commenting on this mental opera-

tion and its effects, Dr. Johnson, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, have proceeded so far as to say that nothing can please many and please long, but just representations of general nature: which (though, like all other extensive truths, it may be liable to exceptions) is a good sound general position, or well founded aphorism, and may be evinced by citing before you the works of those masters who have pleased many, and will long continue to please.

"The characters of Shakespear (says his learned commentator) are not modified by the accidents of transient fashion or temporary opinion: They are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets, a character is too often an individual, in those of Shakespear it is commonly a species."

"His adherence to general nature (con-

tinues Johnson) has exposed him to the censure of critics who form their judgments upon narrower principles. His Romans have been thought not sufficiently Roman, and his Kings not completely royal."

I have not pursued this quotation further, (beautiful though its language continues to be) because it appears to me that Johnson, —hurried away by the rapid stream of his own eloquence, ascribes Shakespear's merit too entirely to this principle. He continues to praise our poet for this talent of generalising, almost as if he exclusively deserved praise on that account; whereas, if I am not mistaken, Shakespear should also be praised for intuitively knowing when and where to employ, so as to promote the general scope of his design, those particular traits which distinguish the individual.—The very nature of the Drama—especially of the Historic Drama and of Comedy, required him to do this, and it may fairly be asked why, but for this particularity, are some of his characters become obsolete?

Art seems most frequently, if not always,

to consist in knowing when, where, and how to be general, and when, where, and how to be particular, and in using this knowledge to advantage: Yet that the artist should in every performance, without exception, generalise as much as he conceives the particular occasion or subject of his work will admit, I am not now prepared to maintain, though I think we may perceive that this principle, modified and varied by difference of talent and opinion, has governed those Engravers, and those Painters, Statuaries, and Poets also, whose works have been most extensively and permanently approved. Of the possible subjects of art, none would seem to require more particularity than a Portrait, yet if we examine the portraits of Titian or Reynolds, or those of the most able Portrait painters of our own time and country, I believe we shall find that they have generalised, not only in their back-grounds and draperies, but even in the Faces themselves, as much as they conceived the occasions would respectively admit: and I trust, I shall be able to shew from the works of Woollett and other mo-

dern Engravers who have distinguished themselves, that their practice has been regulated by the same principles, especially in characterising the substances or textures of the various objects they had to represent.

It has been observed to you with great truth by the professor Opie, that the Venus de Medicis and other Greek statues of high character, were formed by this mental process; and when Zeuxis painted his celebrated Helen from six selected beauties, he did not (as has been vulgarly supposed) copy the head of one, the arm of another, the leg of a third, and so forth.—This would have been an heterogeneous jumble of *parts*, —but having placed all his models in the attitude he intended for his Helen, he abstracted and drew from all, what was *common* to all, omitting the peculiarities of each, and thus formed his general idea and representation of that superlative Beauty, which had set the world in arms!

Whether I shall prove tedious or instruc-

tive by endeavouring to throw in these gleams of analogical light, which to me appear to disclose the delicate ties of relationship between the Sister Arts, I cannot tell; I can only hope that, where I *intend* to illustrate my subject, I shall not stray, nor lead my audience astray, after *false* lights: But I have dwelt the longer on the term generalising, from having observed, that the neglect of attending to its true import, has led both in theory and practice to two vicious and opposite extremes, which have been promulgated and maintained with equal zeal by their respective partizans: On the one side it has been held, that we ought—and indeed that we *can* only represent particular and individual Nature, and on the other, that Art, strictly speaking, is no imitation at all of external nature. The first of these principles, leads of necessity to taking pains in a wrong direction, or what the Lecturer on Painting, by a bold metaphor, has called "climbing downward:" the latter to such aerostatic flights as baffle our perceptive faculties. He who, possessed by the former notion,

should sit down to Paint or Engrave portraits; if he began at Reynolds or Sharp, must descend to Denner or Fiquet; and in Landscape, if he began to paint or engrave trees with Poussin or Vivares, must finish with the laboured precision of botanical detail.

On the other hand—the contrary practice must produce such vague smearings—such "airy nothings," as we might suppose could neither receive name, nor local habitation receive *them*, did we not frequently see the habitations of our friends thus disfigured. In short, the prevalence of this principle, if admitted as such, must require the practitioner to leave more and more, till at length *all* must be left for the imagination of the spectator, and fortuitous blotting, or manual dexterity, be substituted for essential imitation, or characteristic representation of Nature.

I shall at present add but little, to the much that has been said and written on those indispensable terms of Art, Beauty, and Sublimity.

Of Beauty it may be said, as a celebrated critic has said of Shakespear, that the subject has been illustrated into obscurity. We have been alternately and successively taught to identify it with utility, with proportion, with goodness, with fashion, with propriety, with serpentine lines, and with central forms; or to consider it as a compound quality, consisting of various modifications and mixtures of these;—and these doctrines are severally supported by elaborate reasonings, and highly respected names.

Amid the splendour of such various lights, who is not dazzled and confounded? —Who shall direct his attention steadily to the object—and that object, Beauty!

From a persuasion that these differences of opinion, are rather seeming, than real differences, I should have thought it a pleasing task, if time had permitted me, to endeavour to reconcile them. Some reconciliation may, however, arise out of the

brief notice I may now be able to bestow on the subject.

Presuming the *Beautiful** to be synonimous with the *Lovely*—as in my opinion it is,—the following questions immediately arise. Is it what is felt or perceived to be lovely or pleasurable, by each individual, that is properly termed beautiful? or what by sympathetic consent is acknowledged to be so felt by the societies of which such individuals are respectively members?—Or has this feeling resulted from the gradual refinement of all societies, in so far as such refinement may operate at any specified time or place?

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* If we derive our English word Beauty from the French language, its radix must be in the first syllable, which means finery, or what is agreeably irritating to the sense of vision: If we have taken its meaning from the Greek τὸ καλον, I am informed that it is synonymous with Goodness: I am also informed, that if we go still further back, to Homer, and the writers anterior to the Attic philosophy, we recede in a circle, and are carried round to French meaning; καλος and καλλος relating only to physical beauty.

It does appear to me that the word Beauty, though it be always used to denote lovely or pleasurable objects or feelings, is subject in its application to the variations of meaning that may arise from the reciprocal reflection, and re-reflection of the pleasurable perceptions or feelings of individuals, on the general pleasurable perception or feeling of society—and *vice versâ*.

In the gross sense of the term therefore, the feeling of the beautiful exists, (as has been declared from this place) among savages; and the strong expression of pleasure with which they view shining baubles, (which pleasure is very far from being confined to savages) demonstrates the identity of the beautiful with the pleasurable or lovely, as far as respects *them*.

A modern traveller of urbanity and observation, pourtrays the rural delights of a Dutchman in the following terms: "He builds himself a dwelling: It is a hut in size—It is a palace in neatness. It is necessarily situated among damps, upon a flat,

and perhaps behind the banks of a sluggish canal" (objects the most irreconcileable to to our notions of beauty)—Yet, he writes upon it, " my Delight!" " Country pleasures!" "Country prospects!"—or some other inscription that might characterise the vale of Tempe, or the garden of Eden. He cuts his trees into fantastic forms, hangs his awning round with small bells, and decorates his Sunday jacket with dozens of little buttons."

It may very fairly be asked, is this Beauty? and it may be answered, yes—to a Dutchman, living among Dutchmen, it *is* beauty. That is, it may with as much propriety be so termed, as sparkling beads or shining counters to a South-sea islander, or as the preposterous fashions which sometimes obtain a temporary admission amongst ourselves.

Of these examples, that of the South-sea islander is meant as an instance of the simple pleasure (or beauty) of unimproved

vision: the two latter as instances of that feeling of the beautiful, which results in part from the operation of education and habit, or is produced by the action and reaction of the sympathies of society on the individuals of which the societies are respectively constituted, and of the mental energies or influence of the individuals on the societies. Both are intended as examples to illustrate the perception or acknowledgment of mere *local* beauty, the one such as *custom*, (or extended fashion) the other such as *fashion*, (or limited custom) teaches us to enjoy.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that a change somewhat analogous to this in principle, takes place in the mind of every educated individual as he advances from childhood toward maturity. The adult is no longer delighted with what appeared beautiful in infancy, nor the young man with what charmed him at the age of adolescence. His taste gradually changes, or rather forms, as his pleasures and the circle

of his social intercourse increase—and

> " To youth as it ripens gives sentiment new;
> " The *object* still *changing*, the *sympathy* true."

But beside this local perception or acknowledgment of beauty, which is elaborated from the pleasures of each particular community; there is a feeling or perception of the beautiful which is unvarying in its principle, and refined in proportion to the real refinement of intellectual pleasure. It appears to have originally sprung from the same root with the grosser meaning of the term; the difference to have resulted from cultivation; and the one to bear the same reference to the calm enjoyments of mental taste, that the other does to the more tumultuous pleasures of unimproved sensation.

Beauty, as has long since been observed by Mr. Burke, is a social quality, and all rules and aphorisms of which it is the basis, are corollaries elaborated from the social state, approximating to correctness as that social state is really refined, or cultivated upon genuine principles. If mortal hand

could graduate the scale, the perception of Beauty, might be made the test and measure of civilization; for the enjoyment of the beautiful—the feeling of what is truly beautiful, appears to have been in all countries and in every age, attendant upon what was esteemed to be lovely or attractive, and to have been refined, as pleasure is refined, in a direct ratio to the progress of human intellect; from the lowest degree—from the simple raptures of the South-sea islander, up to its highest point of Attic perfection.*

Having stated my belief that some reconciliation of the various hypotheses which have been entertained and inculcated with

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* Those who heard me read this discourse in the Lecture-room, will perhaps remember, that I then introduced examples from Greek mythology, in support, as I conceived, of this opinion. I believed at that time, that the Greek artists and philosophers, had regarded Venus as the goddess of Beauty, and Cupid, or Love, as the offspring of Venus; and I made use of this belief as the key-stone of my hypothesis, which must now stand—*if* it stand, without it—a mere Gothic arch.

respect to the source of Beauty, might arise out of the view which I had taken of the subject, it is incumbent upon me to state also why I have been led to form that opinion. Those who contend that there are certain forms as well as colours, that, abstractedly from all mental associations, are most grateful to the sense of Vision, will agree with me, that though such objects merely address themselves to the sense, we are very much accustomed to term them pleasing or beautiful, or (from analogy consisting probably in a similar affection of the nerves) by the more mental term, lovely; and as all lovely objects are most lovely when they are in their highest perfection, when they are likewise most useful, best proportioned, and most excellent, I conceive that the advocates of Utility, Perfection, Proportion, Goodness, and Propriety, will agree with me also; for they will not contend that *all* useful, or perfect, or well proportioned objects are beautiful, since a bat or a toad may be as perfect and as well proportioned, and for aught we know as useful as a rose or a swan. Wherefore, I

argue, on the whole, that unless objects call forth the tender affections, or are lovely, they are not beautiful, however perfect, central, or well proportioned their forms; and vice versâ, that if they do call forth this tender sentiment, they are beautiful, though we should not have discovered their usefulness, or the justness of their proportions.

It has sometimes been thought that a verbal distinction ought to be made between that refined and permanent sense of Beauty, which results sympathetically from the gradual refinement of Societies, and the vague and temporary use of the term: but critics of the first authority, either from modest doubts of their own literary influence, or from perceiving that the gross, was in fact blended with the refined meaning, have found it wisest to acquiesce in the present usages; and as words in a discourse, like colours in a picture, or lines in an engraving, always derive part of their meaning, from those other words, colours or lines, near which they happen to be placed, it

will be my duty to attend to this relation, and avail myself of these means, in order to be correctly understood.

The meaning of SUBLIMITY appears now to be more settled. It *literally* signifies loftiness: and whether we say a sublime object, is an object of power to *dilate* or *exalt* the mind of the beholder, we mean the same thing: being obliged in this, as in most other cases, to make use of a physical term to express a metaphysical meaning.

The author of the "Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," has taught, that Terror and *Sublimity* are synonimous terms: a mistake for which (especially with Longinus before him) it is so difficult to account, that, after reading him with attention, we can scarcely believe we have not misconceived his meaning,—yet, he plainly and expressly says, that "Terror is in all cases whatsoever, either openly or latently the ruling principle of the Sublime."

The introduction of the Ghost in Shake-

spear's Hamlet is fraught with all those circumstances which would seem to render it a fit illustration of the subject before us: but it goes directly to invalidate Mr. Burke's hypothesis.

Of the four persons who witness its appearance, it is worthy of notice, that the sublimity of their characters is in an inverse ratio to their Fears—or rises in proportion as they are exempt from Terror. Bernardo and Marcellus,

> ——————————" Distill'd
> Almost to jelly with the act of *Fear*
> Stand dumb."—

Horatio, possessing somewhat more courage, speaks to it, and HAMLET not only speaks to it as he had vowed—" though Hell itself should bid him hold his peace," but follows it toward the brink of extreme danger, (in opposition to the earnest dissuasions of his friends) with a mind dilating more and more, as the danger seems to increase.

I had pursued this chain of reasoning to

more considerable length, but the recent appearance of a book, where the subject is amply discussed, and which is in almost every hand, renders it unnecessary to read all that I had written. It may be sufficient to add, that Mr. Knight has recalled the word (Sublimity) to its original meaning: He has satisfactorily shewn that rapturous or elevated feeling, *whatever* may be the exciting cause, *is* Sublimity, and that the tenderest Odes of Love, as well as the most terrific Images of War,* may raise the mind to this exalted tone: He has proved that Time does not alter Truth: He has re-registered the decision of that "ardent Judge who, zealous to his trust, with warmth gave sentence—but was always just."

I do not foresee that I shall have much occasion for the word Picturesque: Yet it is at present so fashionably technical in almost all conversations respecting Art, that something would seem wanting, were I entirely to omit noticing it in this place.

* The instances cited by Longinus, and referred to by Mr. Knight, are the well known prayer of Ajax, and Sappho's empassioned Ode, "Blest as the immortal Gods, &c."

The term PICTURESQUE signifies, as a Painter would wish. Though we know that all painters wish not alike; that Gerard Lairesse, as well as some other painters, have ridiculed the idea of any other than the beautiful class of objects being esteemed picturesque, and that each painter of genius, may claim and exercise an equal right of denominating those objects and effects Picturesque, which are congenial with his own powers, or his own views of the practical energies of his art, yet, we are supposed to be able to form by induction a common or generic idea of what painters in the aggregate would prefer—or (which is the same thing) to form an abstract idea of a painter, with whose pleasures we would sympathise, and of whose enthusiasm we must partake, if we would really feel and enjoy the Picturesque.

The enjoyment of the Picturesque, consists in a perception, as far as respects Painting, of what Akenside could call 'the kindred powers of discordant things,'—that is, of the kindred analogies and connecting

principles between Nature and the Painter's Art.

In general we argue Cause from Effect: Here by a sort of re-active or inverted perception, means and end are in the painter's mind supposed to change places, and, possessing a painter's taste, we apply the term picturesque to those objects and effects, which are calculated to call forth the spontaneous and peculiar energies, and facilities of the Painter's Art. But example may perhaps throw a milder light upon the subject, and some may the more readily discern what *is*, from being led to observe what *is not* picturesque. With this in view allow me to recal Gray's inimitable Ode of the Bard to your recollection: From this poem, pictures have often been attempted, and very good pictures have sometimes been produced:—Yet perhaps the Bard has never been, and perhaps never can be, painted so as to affect the spectator's mind like a perusal of the Ode itself, because it contains incidents and circumstances, which though highly poetical, are so far from be-

ing picturesque, that they cannot even be represented by painting.

An aged Bard denouncing prophetic vengeance, and an Host struck with dismay, may be painted; the Bard may be exalted on a rock, he may be "robed in the sable garb of Woe, and his loose beard and hoary hair, stream like a meteor through the troubled air?"—But who shall delineate, "the *deep sorrows* of his Lyre?"—What pencil shall describe "desart caves, *sighing* to the torrent's awful voice beneath?—Or Giant Oaks *breathing revenge in hoarser murmurs?*"—With an hundred other circumstances from which the Poem derives so much pathos and majesty?—The reason is, that these incidents, though they may be deemed analogous to the local energies and graces of the Musician's Art, are not so to those of the Painter's.

Let it not be thought here that I presume to affirm or to think it impossible for the Art of Painting, to reach these ideas of the Poet. I am so far from entertaining

such an opinion, that I think ideas equally beyond the apparent scope of a given Art, in the vulgar estimation, have sometimes been happily attained—not only by this Art, but by that of Engraving also, as I shall presently endeavour to evince.

In using the term Picturesque, we speak according to the best dictates of our own taste, of the known and practicable, not of the possible unknown, powers of the Art of Painting, and mean simply and briefly, analogous to the general idea or opinion we entertain of the known energies of the Painter's Art: and having once chosen to admit this foreign termination into your language, you may (by the same license) frame the term *Sculpturesque*, or *Woollet-esque*, or almost any other *esque* you please.

"The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,"

is a verse, that, as it first strikes our attention, seems to be entirely and very much beyond the reach of the Engraver's Art, or—(to adopt this fashionable termina-

tion) not at all Engraver-*esque:* Yet, I have never met with a person of observation and feeling, who had enjoyed the freshness of the morning at that early hour, and had seen the *Aurora* of Count Goudt, who did not acknowledge with delight, that the Count had been as completely successful in affecting his imagination, with this sentiment, as Gray.

We cannot, however, expect that every imagination will be thus awakened or impressed: Those who have not enjoyed this early freshness, in a romantic country, cannot possibly enjoy this Print, because it operates—like all the higher efforts in Art, by stimulating imagination to the conception of more than is actually exhibited.

" 'Tis *charmed Fancy* bids the lovely Landscape live," and I lately had a pleasing opportunity of observing this effect produced upon a friend of mine, possessing a mind, certainly of no common powers. In the ardour of youthful enthusiasm, he occasionally rose at day-break to roam over

the Swiss mountains in pursuit of a favourite study, and now—at the distance of forty years, Count Goudt's engraving of the Aurora seemed to operate on his imagination in precisely the same manner that the distant prospect of Eton College, did on that of our poet Gray, and with equal potency to call up remote but kindred recollections. It may be thought that our recollections of odours, are not very vivid, yet, those of sight, seemed in his mind (as we were looking together at the Print) to recal these also, with all the concomitant feelings of early life. He appeared to feel "a momentary bliss," to be exhilarated by ideal gales, —again to bound in imagination over the mountains of Helvetia, "and redolent of joy and youth, to breathe life's second spring."

It is not uncommon among print-publishers—nor even amongst Engravers themselves, to hear the word Colour mistakenly employed to signify *shade;* so that if they think an engraving too dark, they say it has too much *colour*, too little colour if too

light—and so forth. The same ignorance which has hitherto reigned over the pursuits of this Art, has here imposed its authority, and with the same unfortunate success: I cannot however yield to it the same submission, since it is not only a palpable misuse of a word, but would lead to endless confusion, when I come to explain to you my ideas of the means the Art of Engraving possesses of rendering local colour in the abstract. Wherefore, whenever I may use the term *colour*, I mean it in no other than its ordinary acceptation.

By MIDDLE-TINT, I understand and mean, "the medium between strong light and strong shade."—These are Mr. Gilpin's words, and he adds, with a propriety that confers value on the definition—"the phrase is *not at all* expressive of *colour*."

As we frequently hear the uninformed talk as if they conceived the highest effort of Painting, was merely to *copy* nature, as nature appears to them, so it is very common to hear unreflecting people speak of

Engraving, as if it were no other than an art of copying that of Painting: which though a great mistake, is yet a very pardonable mistake on the part of those who have been led into it, when we consider the state in which the Art of Engraving has hitherto existed, and the difficulties and the degradation under which in this country, it has hitherto laboured.

Now, Engraving is no more an art of *copying* Painting, than the English language is *an art of copying* Greek or Latin. Engraving is a distinct language of Art: and though it may bear such resemblance to Painting in the construction of its grammar, as grammars of languages bear to each other, yet its alphabet and idiom, or mode of expression, are totally different. *If* English be made the vehicle of the same thoughts which have previously been conveyed to us in Greek; or if Engraving be made the vehicle of the same thoughts which have previously been imparted to us by painting, it affords the means of affecting our minds in the same manner: this simi-

lar affection of the mind, has led to the mistake, and I have little doubt but that English would have been inconsiderately called an art of copying Greek, if we had never read any other English than *translations from* the Greek.

The pretensions of engraving, as of all the arts denominated Fine, are simple, chaste, unsophisticated. Art ever disdains artifice, attempts no imposition, but honestly claims attention as being what it is. A Statue is to be looked at as being a statue—not a real Figure; a Picture, not as a portion of actual Nature; a Print, not as a copy of Painting.

An Engraving therefore—that of the death of General Wolfe, for example, is no more a copy of Mr. West's picture, than the same composition, if sculptured or modelled in low relief, would be a copy. In both cases they would be, not copies, but *translations* from one language of Art, into another language of Art. How far Woollett's may be esteemed a correct trans-

lation, we shall inquire upon some future occasion—at present, let those to whom the distinction is not rendered sufficiently obvious, recollect, that neither in the case of the basso-relievo nor the engraving, is local colour employed, which forms so indispensable a part of a picture, and is consequently so essential to the production of the resemblance of a picture, that it would have been among the first considerations that would have engaged the attention of him who should conceive he was exercising an art of copying that of Painting.

But absurdity blossoms luxuriantly when engrafted on an original stock of error; and this vulgar and erroneous notion, that an Engraving is a copy of a Painting, has been assiduously cultivated by the avarice or ignorance of the dealers in prints, who always follow and pamper the taste of the mob, be it ever so depraved, provided it be profitable. That grass was green, and that soldiers' coats were red, was known to the most ignorant of the gaping multitude, and gave wings to credulity, and currency to

empiricism. Whether ignorance, or the unprincipled love of gain, were the predominating cause, I do not presume to determine—neither is it of the smallest importance, since the effect has been equally fatal to the improvement of the public taste: It is error sufficient to call for animadversion here, if the printsellers, possessing or possessed by this mistaken notion, and with the view of making the copy, in their own vulgar estimation, approach nearer to its original, have caused colours to be literally and barbarously added to engraving: Now to colour a legitimate engraving,* (one of Sir Robert Strange's, or Woollett's for instance) is not less palpably absurd to an eye of tasteful discernment, than it would be to colour a Diamond, which, as is well known, would but obscure the native brilliancy and beauty of the stone.

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* Since I had the honour of reading this Lecture, I have been told to look at the coloured engravings of Volpato, after Raphael's pictures in the Vatican. The inspection has served to confirm my principles: the colourist has employed opaque pigments, and consequently has obscured the Engraving, and used only the outlines, of Volpato.

Had the Statuary's Art been unfortunately placed under the same auspices with that of the Engraver, who can doubt that the monuments lately erected to the memory of our brave defenders, would have been mere gew-gaws for children—would have been ordered to stop in Fleet-street, on their way to St. Paul's, for the additions of colour and glass eyes—in short, for the fair author of Royal Wax-work—to finish?

If a good engraving must thus suffer by being coloured; so neither can bad ones, be thus converted to good pictures: at the utmost, nothing better than a sort of mule production can thus be generated—though with much more of the ass than of the horse in its constitution.

I may possibly be told here, that the mode of engraving, or endotting, which I have already described, held forth the means of obviating these objections, by its susceptibility of being *printed* in colours; (and hence one cause of the avidity with which the majority of print-dealers pur-

sued it.) But even were the printer an artist, and even were the colours employed, true to nature or the original picture from which any coloured plate has been engraven, the very nature of the process of printing in colours, would throw back these elements into chaotic confusion: the colours are unavoidably so blurred and confounded, in what, in the language of printing is called *filling in* the plate, and afterward wiping and clearing off the superfluous colour or ink, that such prints as they come from the press, have a very crude, confused, and discordant appearance.

To substitute order and harmony, to discord and confusion, seems to call for no common powers: Yet, who are the persons employed to execute this delicate and difficult task? They are in general the most ignorant, of all the ignorant pretenders to Art: Those who can scarcely hold a pencil, are the cheap drudges appointed by the dealers, to perform a task which requires the practised hand, the cultivated eye, and the consummate judgment of a master.

The eye, the hand, and the judgment of a *Painter,* can alone confer value on a coloured work of art—call it picture, print, or whatever you please: nothing else can entitle it to the denomination of a *work of Art.* Unless therefore, the incidental smearings and errors of the printer in colours, be rectified by the author of the original picture from which any stippled plate has been engraven, or some person of equal, and of similar powers, and capable of entering into his views; such performances must ever remain unworthy the attention of those who possess the smallest pretensions to Taste.

From what has been said, I believe it will have appeared that the production of good coloured prints, would be incompatible with the views, or at least with the practical exertion of the talents, of a genuine Painter, who (even were he to be well paid for it) could never submit to stifle his inventive powers in the drudgery of copying his own works, while by multiplying them, he lessened the nominal value of each; and

would also be incompatible with the views of those who deal in these coloured commodities from motives of mere pecuniary profit,—disregarding the profit of the mind.

It may perhaps be necessary to return to points which have been so much misrepresented as those to which we have just been attending, at some future time. Of the phenomena both of Nature and Art, the most frequent, are sometimes the least understood; nor is it uncommon for what we daily and hourly see, to escape mental cognizance, or at least to elude critical attention.

LECTURE IV.

Discovery and promulgation of the means of printing Engravings on paper—Of the earliest Engravings on Wood—The Buxheim Print, and engraved block in Earl Spencer's collection—Of the earliest Engravings on metal performed with a view to their being printed at the Rolling Press—Of curious Prints in the Collection of Mr. Cracherode, and Dr. Monro—Importance of Printing—Approaches of the Ancients toward this Art—Of Roman and Etruscan engravings on metal—Doubts respecting German Wood-engraving—Of the first German Engravings on copper—Gothic taste of design—Of Martin Schoen—Critical observations on his St. Anthony, and his procession to the Crucifixion—Of Albert Durer—Critical observations on his Melancholy, his St. Jerome, and his St. Hubert—Comparison between him and Spenser—Reflections on early Works of Art, prejudices of Education, and principles of Criticism—Of the Adam and Eve, Death's-head, Life of Christ, Portraits and other Engravings of Albert Durer—Of the invention of Etching, the Cannon, and other Etch-

ings, by Albert Durer—Slight notice of Lucas van Leyden, Aldegrever, Altdorfer, Penz, and the Behams—Summary of the farther progress of Engraving—Of the Engravings of Mair and Da Carpi in imitation of Painters' sketches and cartoons.

LECTURE IV.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

NOTWITHSTANDING that engraving on various metals had long been practised, the earliest mode of printing on paper, was from the surfaces of engraven blocks or tablets of wood. Guttemberg of Mentz, or Faust of Strasbourg, first promulgated this art about the year 1440, or between that time and 1450; and their respective partizans, have contended for annexing a degree of celebrity to their names, to which, as inventors, neither of them is fairly entitled. Extremely rude outlines of saints and legendary tales had previously been engraven, apparently with the view of exciting the attention of the vulgar, and had been a mode, (which no person at the time thought of turning to better account) of disseminating monkish superstition. Of these, some few collected in Germany, are preserved in the curious and valuable libraries

of Lord Spencer and Mr. Douce, to some of which, the names and legends of the Saints, &c. are added for the better information of the unlearned spectator: and it seems more than probable that these alphabetic additions, which are in the old German black letter, gave the first idea to Guttemberg, Faust, or Koster, of printing books, for precisely in this way, and not from moveable types, were books originally engraven and printed; and I believe they are so printed in China, to this day.

One of the earliest of Koster's books that I have seen, is of this kind, and contains a much larger portion of picture (if so it might be called) than of reading. It is in the Cracherode collection, which is now open to the public, and consists of sixteen leaves, each containing two subjects illustrative of Solomon's song: It is printed only on one side of the paper; shadowing with a single course of lines is feebly attempted, and under each print is a Latin scroll or label, cut in German text, on the same block. But there is a somewhat older book

in the Bodleian library, and another in the the bibliographical collection of my Lord Spencer, of which the subject is the Apocalypse, and where colour is clumsily added with the hair pencil, though without any attempt at gradation of light, much in the manner of old playing cards.

The Baron Heinnekin with great probability, thinks that the painters of the playing-cards, were really the first European printers; that they devised the method of cutting the kings, queens, &c. upon wood, to save the trouble of making a separate drawing for each card; and that they also cut the single prints of religious subjects, I have just mentioned, of which he found one of a folio size, and dated so early as the year 1423, pasted into a book, in the library of a convent at Buxheim near Memmingen.

This curious print, supposed to be the oldest extant, having been lately purchased by Lord Spencer, is now on its way to England, and will very soon find its proper

place in his valuable* collection: meanwhile the noble Earl has kindly enabled me to shew you a fac-simile of this ancient Print, which was cut a few years ago, and has also allowed me to remove from his library a still greater curiosity for your inspection. It is one of the original blocks which was used in the very infancy of Printing, before moveable types were invented, and before shadowing was even feebly indicated. Of the history and visions of St. John the Divine, no fewer than six editions were thus engraven and printed, at this early period, and the impressions from the block I have now the honour to exhibit, constituted according to Baron Heinnekin, the second leaf of the second edition, of which there is a copy in the Royal Library at Buckingham-house: It is probably therefore, one of the earliest engravings on wood that were ever performed, and perhaps the oldest that is now extant.

Hence it appears that the art of engrav-

* It has since been received, and is now in the library at Spencer-house.

ing on wood, was the parent of that of printing from the surface, and with the letter-press. To the art of printing with the rolling-press, or of delivering ink from the incisions of the graver, it has in like manner, been disputed among the learned—or rather among the curious, whether Italy or Germany, and whether accident or design, had the honour of giving birth.

Italy rests her pretensions on the following circumstances recorded by Vasari. It is known to be common with those who engrave ornaments on plate, occasionally to rub a little charcoal, or oil, or both, into their work, for the purpose of seeing the better what they are about. In the year 1460, Maso or Thomaso Finiguerra, a goldsmith of Florence, chanced to cast or let fall a piece of engraving thus filled with this sort of ink, into melted sulphur; and observing that the exact impression of his work was left on the sulphur, repeated the experiment on moistened paper, rolling it gently with a roller. It was attended with success, and Finiguerra, imparting his dis-

covery to Baccio Baldini of the same place and profession, it was by him communicated to Sandro Boticelli, and perhaps also to Antonio Pollajuoli, and Andrea Mantegna.

At this time the intercourse between Italy and Germany, was much less frequent and considerable, than it soon afterward became; and Mr. Strutt has on the other hand produced a German print from the collection of the late Dr. Monro, of which the date is 1461, and says we have several other engravings by the same master, and that the impressions are so neatly taken from the plates, that they could not be done much better even at present, whence he concludes that they were not the first specimens of copper-plate printing.

The print which is reputed to be the oldest in the Cracherode collection, is evidently by the same engraver as this of Dr. Monro, and appears too highly finished and and too well printed, to be really one of the first: The same collection contains

however, another print from a copper or silver plate, which I should suppose to be of a still earlier date: It is in a very inferior style, full of contradictions in the perspective, and error in the drawing of the figures; and the angularity, meagreness, and painful attention to minutiæ, that characterise the productions of the early German artists, are excessive.

Its subject is Augustus and the Sybil, and the Emperor's diadem, (which is elaborately wrought) as well as the profusion of finery about his dress, seem to point toward the goldsmith's shop, as its origin.

Mr. Strutt, after pursuing his inquiry into the priority of the German or Italian pretensions, to some length, brings forward an impression from an *English* plate in his own possession, which he thinks "*may* claim the palm of early date:" this claim, however, he afterward rather withdraws than enforces, and in conclusion, has shewn his regard for veracity, by quitting the subject without venturing a step further than his

data would safely carry him, and without deciding on the superior antiquity of Italian or German printing.

A knowledge of the era and of the author of a great work or an useful invention, is certainly desirable: Beside that it is necessary to the truth of History, it seems to assist us in indulging the amiable sentiment of Gratitude. It would call forth our sincere regret, if the name of the author of Paradise Lost, or the Cartoons, or Principia, had sunk in oblivion.—But, at the time which we are considering, paper and ink were in constant and daily use; and impressions from dies and from seals had for ages been taken, and were under hourly observation: wherefore it required no protracted train of thought; no long connected chain of causes and effects; no mighty genius, like that of Homer, Michael Angelo, or Newton, to perceive that impressions might also be taken either from the surfaces or incisions of engraved blocks or plates.

The Art of Printing, as I conceive, origi-

nated in a concurrence of circumstances entirely independent of the minds or studies of its reputed inventors: We have seen that at first, when it was coarsely performed, and, like the tops of ballads and the dying speeches of criminals at present, grossly addressed itself to the lower classes of the community, it was regarded as of very little consequence; and though Koster, Guttemberg, and Faust and his coadjutor, cannot be ranked in the class of inventors, I am ready to allow them the inferior merit of perceiving that the Arts of Engraving and Printing might be applied to purposes of greater magnitude and importance than had hitherto been observed. It is the important consequences *gradually resulting from* the discovery, that have made us attach a degree of credit to the name, and entertain an unmerited respect for the supposed researches, of the discoverer, to which in point of real ingenuity, the maker of the first pair of spectacles* or stockings, would be far more justly entitled.

* Of this great contributor to the enjoyments of old age and benefactor to imperfect vision, Lord Kaimes has fa-

The process of Printing is indeed so simple in itself, and was so nearly obvious in the state of things we have just attended to, that a child at play, who wanted to multiply a given form, might almost be ashamed not to have perceived it: and we ought rather to wonder it was not discovered sooner, than that it was discovered so soon: Hence some have suspected that it *was* known and concealed by those who might think themselves interested in preventing the diffusion of knowledge; and *if* the former arbiters of Europe, could be believed to have been *Bonapartes*, we might have given ample credit to the surmise.

Printing was not however promulgated till toward the middle of the fifteenth century, and the day of its promulgation was certainly a day of unparalleled importance to Europe. Of that auspicious and me-

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voured us with the name and country. He says "Spectacles for assisting the sight were invented by Alexander Spina, a Monk of Pisa, about the end of the thirteenth century." Sketches of Man. 5. Sect. 1.

morable day, and of this immortal Art, considered in their consequences, it would be difficult to think or to speak too highly. They have frequently been the favourite theme of panegryric with the Poet* and the Patriot, and should be for ever consecrate in the annals of mankind. The sublime station that Archimedes wished for in vain, seemed then spontaneously to emerge to notice; and then was constructed the immense lever, by means of which the whole civilised world may be moved by a single hand!—Empowered by this invention, the Professor of the imitative Arts, may disseminate every truth and every pleasure, that sight and imagination operating upon Nature, can extract or convey; the Philosopher may dispel the clouds of ignorance and error, and diffuse the light of science; the Poet may paint the charms of religion and morality to an admiring world,

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* Since this Lecture was first delivered, they have been the subject of a Poem of very considerable merit, by Mr. J. M'Creery, to whose care I have consigned the printing of this volume.

and the most obscure individual, if he possess the talents and the virtue, may expose the errors and the vices, while he braves the indignation, even of the most powerful and opulent. Hence an unshackled press—a sacred right which in this country is *peculiarly* enjoyed, has in all free states been esteemed the great test, bulwark, and palladium, of Liberty and Truth.

In tracing effects to their true causes, it ought not to be forgotten that the great benefits we have derived, and continue to derive, from Engraving and Printing, ought in fairness, to be partly ascribed to the discovery of the means of converting rags into paper: this probably *helped to suggest the idea* of Printing, and perhaps two centuries and a half had scarcely more than brought this invention to the degree of perfection necessary for the reception of impressions from types and engravings. Had the modern art of making paper been known to the ancients, we had probably never heard the names of Faust and Finiguerra, for with

the same kind of stamps which the Roman tradesmen used for their pottery and packages, books might also have been printed; and the same engraving which adorned the shields and pateras of the more remote ages, with the addition of paper, might have spread the rays of Greek and Etrurian intelligence, over the world of antiquity.

Of the truth of this assertion, I have the satisfaction to lay before you the most decided proofs, by exhibiting engraved Latin inscriptions both in cameo and in intaglio, from the collection of Mr. Douce,* with impressions taken from them at Mr. Savage's letter-press, but yesterday; and also a print, taken with permission, from a Greek, Phrygian, or Etruscan patera, in the Hamiltonian collection: the latter is a mere outline in a bad style of two figures in the Phrygian dress, and though it possesses no *merit*

* One of these is an intaglio stamp engraved on stone, with which a Roman oculist was used to mark his medicines, the other, which is of metal, and in cameo, is simply the proper name of the (Roman) tradesman by whom it has probably been used, "Titus Valagini Mauri."

whatever, it serves to shew how little was wanting to the ancients, of the modern art of printing from the incisions of the graver, and may be thought a curiosity, as being in all probability the oldest engraving in the world, from which an impression has been taken on paper.

The British Museum contains moreover, two other ancient engravings, performed exactly in the same manner as we now engrave on copper for printing, of which one —the remains of a Greek parazonium, has been copied and accurately described by Mr. Strutt: the other is also classical both in composition and subject, and is cut on a patera of bronze: Venus attended by Cupid, is represented as preferring a complaint or imploring a favour of Jupiter, and Mercury ordered on an errand, is in the act of departure—stepping through the Zodiac. As I know not that this (perhaps astronomical record) has been either copied,* or

* I have since seen that it has been copied by Raphael, in a drawing (which Marc Antonio has engraven) of four

particularly noticed, I had intended to endeavour to print it for your perusal, but on a close examination, the patera was thought to be too time-worn, and the *Erugo too valuable*, for me to venture on the attempt.†

I am under the necessity of postponing in part, what I may have to state on the subject of Wood-engraving, in consequence of certain suspicions which I could not help entertaining, and which I have not yet been able to remove, that at least some of the productions of the old masters which are generally thought to be impressions from wood, are really printed from some other material, and perhaps from the substance (whatever it may have been) that was ori-

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subjects which appear to be taken from the Æneid. What had been thus noticed by Raphael, it was natural that Sir William Hamilton should desire to possess; and hence we probably owe to Raphael that this curious patera, is now in our national collection.

† In the collection of the late Mr. Townley, are a considerable number of similar pateras of bronze, some of them embossed with chasing, and all ornamented with engravings allusive to the sacrifices and other religious customs and ceremonies of the ancients.

ginally used for letter-types. It appears to me, from the freedom and frequency of the dark crossings which distinguish these works from modern wood engravings, and from this mode of working being obviously the *easiest* mode of producing the effects which their authors had in view, that they are either etchings—the lights being corroded away; or, which is yet more likely, that a prototype or matrix was cut in intaglio, probably with the graver, in which the tablets from whence the prints are taken, were cast in the manner of letter-types.

It is well known that combinations of works of Literature and Art, rude indeed, but printed *at once* and with the *letter*-press, were common from about the time of the appearance of the Nuremberg chronicle. Numerous are the books printed in the two succeeding centuries, that are embellished with letter-press vignettes, and large ornamented capitals at the beginnings of the chapters: and the question naturally occurring to a very intelligent antiquary, (to whom I have the honour of being known.)

What is become of the tablets from whence these ornaments are printed? he employed persons to search for them in those cities of Germany and the Low-countries, which had been celebrated for printing—but they sought in vain. Now had these works been of wood, some of them would probably have been found; whereas, the question of their disappearance, if they were of type-metal, is resolved by supposing that (like old letter-types) they were melted down when worn, or useless from the change of fashion, in order to cast letters with their substance. To believe them to have been of wood, we are therefore compelled to add the improbability of their entire disappearance, to the great labour and difficulty of cutting away the minute interstices between the crossed lines, so as to deliver dark crossings from their surfaces.

About the time now under our consideration, and perhaps at a still earlier period, the artists who stained and painted glass for church windows, &c. were in possession of a method which is totally lost to

the modern practitioners in that Art, of heightening their lights by means of masterly courses of bright strokes or hatchings, which they frequently crossed in various directions. Of such ancient windows I have seen many fragments, some of which display considerable judgment and dexterity of hand, and am somewhat inclined to think that the larger works of Wolgemuth, Albert Durer, and those early German masters who are generally supposed to have engraven on wood, have been accomplished by a similar process—whatever that process might have been.

It appears not improbable that both these arts, and perhaps that of Etching on copper, may have been suggested by the still more ancient ornaments corroded on the sword-blades of Persia and Syria: but, however these events may have been, I have scarcely a doubt that works of art capable of being printed, and perhaps susceptible of much more refinement than I can be at present aware of, may be thus performed on the composition that is now used for letter-

types—and if antimony had been known to the artists and letter-founders of the fifteenth century, I should have had but little hesitation in supposing modern type-metal* to

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* I have to regret that this part of the Lecture is so little better than a statement of doubts. Since this volume has been in the press, I have seen a copy of Johnson's translation of Ambrose Parey's Anatomy, (printed in 1691) which is illustrated with Letter-press engravings, where dark crossings frequently occur, and in the preface to which the author says "the figures in this work are not the same used by my author; but according to those of Bauhine, which were used in the work of Dr. Crook." Upon referring to the latter work (printed 1631) it was evident that the prints were not copies, but from the very same engravings—but there was this remarkable difference, which *ordinary* incredulity could scarcely stand against, that in Johnson's work the prints were obviously impressed from some substance which had been *worm-eaten* in the course of the sixty years it had lain by, and which could not therefore have been *metal.* This single, simple fact, will perhaps be thought decisive against my hypothesis: It disproves that type-metal, but it does not demonstrate that wood, was used for these engravings, though it affords a strong presumption on that side the question; and my *stubborn* opinion, abandoning type-metal, may still fortify itself behind vegetable putties, or pastes that are capable of being hardened—or *any* substance that is capable of being *worm-eaten.*

have been the substance they employed for the purpose now under our consideration.

When I shall have satisfactorily investigated these matters, I shall be better qualified to submit my sentiments on this early and interesting branch of the Art, to your notice. At present, I shall request your more particular attention to the mode of Engraving so as to print from the incisions.

The first of the German engravers on Copper whose works I have seen, and who is fairly entitled to be called an artist, is Martin Schön or Schoen, of Culmbach, whom Vasari, and others on his authority, have mistakenly called Martin of Antwerp.* His prints are without dates, but as he died in 1486, and is said to have commenced his career about or soon after 1460, he probably practised this art almost from its very beginning. Francis van Stoss has been

* The French writers call him hübse Martin, i. e. Martin the handsome, hübsch or Schön, signifying in the German language, handsome.

mentioned as his tutor, but the chronology is not clear, and Stoss has left nothing behind to shew that he was capable of imparting any valuable information.

Martin Schön engraved from his own compositions: His plates are numerous, and shew that his mind was fertile and vigorous. If it was not *sufficiently* vigorous to burst the Gothic fetters which at that time manacled the taste of Germany, his admirers may solace themselves by doubting whether the unassisted powers of any individual whatever, would have been found adequate to so difficult an occasion. The tyranny of established custom is probably not less stern and unrelenting in the arts of design, than in those of education.

How the stiff and meagre manner—the angular draperies and emaciated forms which characterise the early productious of the Germans, came to prevail among the Gothic and Celtic nations from whom they derived them? is a curious and perhaps not an unimportant question. By comparing the

early efforts in art of all nations of which we have any memorials, we may be led to infer that man has gradually learned to see objects as they really exist in nature: The images pictured on the retina of the eye, appear to be refracted in their transmission to the intellectual retina, and in every country to continue to be so refracted, until, as the sun of Science slowly ascends, the morning density of the mental medium is gradually rarefied. It is not less observable, nor a less curious fact, that a similar haggard lankness in the attempts of man in an uncivilised state, to imitate the human form, has almost universally prevailed. The early art of Egypt, Persia, and Hindoostan, agrees in meagreness with the rude efforts of the Mexicans and South-sea islanders, and with the German art, derived from the Gothic and Celtic nations, which is now under our observation.

In the time of Martin Schön, and Albert Durer, German art was much in the same state with European ethics: Theory was separated from practice; and both Art and

Philosophy remained perplexed with false analogies, metaphysical jargon, and occult nonsense, till Bacon and the resurrection of the Antique, referred them to the results of experience, as a criterion of principle.

Under such circumstances, I presume to think that neither my Lord Orford nor any other man, should have dispraised either Schön or Albert Durer, for not having done, what no artist of any other school has of himself been able to perform: For, not only neither of these founders of the German school, but none of the early Italian masters, has shewn that he possessed the penetration to see beyond this gloomy exhalation from the barbaric ages, till the great examples of classic art began to re-appear, and reflect back on Nature the light they had received from her. If, but for this light, and the advantages he derived from contemplating the works of Michael Angelo, Raphael himself might have remained for ever more dry and more elaborately minute than Albert Durer: If the works of Durer convinced Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dufresnoy, and

Vasari, that with an Italian education he would have ranked in the first class of Artists, and if Michael Angelo saw the St. Anthony of Schön, with the delight that Vasari has reported, and even copied it with the addition of* colour—we have the fiat of the first Judges in their favour, and should be too liberally disposed toward them, and too just to ourselves, to allow their misfortunes to be confounded with their faults.

To me it appears that the works of Schön

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* The reader will not however, allow more to this fact, than the measure of importance to which it is fairly entitled. In his account of Martin Schön, Strutt has the following passage: "Michael Angelo was so pleased with the print of St. Anthony carried into the air by evil spirits, that he studied from it himself; which was paying a very high compliment to the abilities of Schoen," and in another place he has added, on the authority of Vasari, that Michael Angelo copied the Print in colours, but has omitted to state (what Vasari has also mentioned, and what has but very lately come to my knowledge) that Michael Angelo was but a school-boy at the time. I mention these things for the sake of accuracy, and not as any acknowledgment of alteration in my opinion of this very remarkable Print.

evince a strong mind operating on the co-existing state of things—brooding over the abyss, from whence the future elements of his art were to be created; and using with considerable success, the materials by which it was surrounded.

It may be regarded as fortunate for his claims, that in the instance of his St. Anthony, he has adopted a subject that in its nature set him free, or nearly so, from the Gothic bondage with which on other occasions his genius was shackled: He has been the *first* boldly to venture into the regions of Chimera, and by the potency of his art, has compelled thence the Demons that Callot and Teniers were afterward solicitous to invoke and proud to employ; while the expression of undisturbed faith and pious resignation in the countenance of the Holy man whom they are hurrying into the air, shews that he saw and copied that portion of Nature which she *did* vouchsafe to unveil to him, with a clear vision and delicate though determined hand. If his Demons are more fantastic and less ter-

rible, than modern art would deem it proper to introduce, we should recollect that the age of Schön was that of Ariosto,* and that two centuries elapsed between the grotesque monsters of Ariosto, and the sublime demonology of Milton.

It is consonant to the progressive improvement of critical observation, that more should be known of the human countenance at an early period, (or indeed at any period) than of the rest of the figure, because it is the kind of study and observation in which men are most interested. Accordingly, Schön's heads are in general by far the best parts of his performances. Those of his single figures of St. Martin and St. John, have considerable merit; the divine character and expression of that of his Christ bearing his cross, as it appears in

* Ariosto was twelve years of age when Schön died. If there be any trifling error in saying that the age of Schön was that of Ariosto, the correction of that error, is in favour of the principle I am here supporting: namely, the general slow progress of the improvement of human intellect.

the good impressions, has rarely been surpassed, and several other heads in this extensive composition, possess a proportionable share of excellence. (Of this plate there are two copies, one of which is by Bartholomew Schön, the brother of Martin, and both are very inferior to the original. I mention this in passing, that persons desirous of possessing Martin Schön's, which is marked with his initials, may be careful not to mistake.)

In some of the engravings of this artist, I trace a latent feeling that his art might be rendered subservient to the expression of the various textures of substances:—Nay, *more* than this—Expression of texture strongly discovers itself in the grain of the wooden Cross; in the various modes he has invented of describing different sorts of drapery, and in the sterility of the ground: perhaps the latter is as much the result of the necessary operation of the uneducated graver, as of study—Yet, is it in such full concord with the barrenness of the scene and barbarism of the subject, as to be not un-

worthy of your favourable notice; while the whole together seems to shew that a sentiment has subsisted from the very commencement of Engraving, that it was susceptible of this particular merit, and which may therefore be fairly presumed to be not founded in the fallacious refinements of modern fashion, (though perhaps sometimes run after with too much fashionable avidity) but one of the primary elements of the Art.

Of the ways in which an artist of Genius may enlarge the sphere of human knowledge, the discovery and practical exhibition of new resemblances, either actual or analogical, between Nature and the local energies or blandishments of his art, is one: and it is one in which Albert Durer, who studied the works of Schön, greatly distinguished himself.

I ought at the same time to observe to you, that his resemblances, for the most part, proceed too much upon fac-simile principles for the generalised dignity of

his subjects, and that his powers of imitation are too prodigally lavished upon subordinate and unessential parts.

The expression of his figure of Melancholy, which would else have approached Sublimity, is considerably injured by the introduction of a multitude of objects, most of which the mind does not readily assimilate with the sentiment of Melancholy: It must first be perceived or discovered, that these objects are allusions to Astrology, Alchemy, and the occult Sciences, as they were called:—The performance addresses itself therefore to the curious and inquisitive part of mankind, and not to Man: and as neither the eye nor the mind, can at once dilate with greatness and descend to littleness, it is evident that the research it requires, must be the destruction of Sublimity.

Though here is nothing of the "holy calm," with which Collins has surrounded *his* figure of Melancholy, this composition may still be thought interesting on another

account—I mean as a true picture of the times in which it was engraven; for precisely thus was attention perplexed and distracted on most philosophical subjects, in the age of Albert Durer; and as he is the author of seven Treatises, most of which are on the metaphysics of Art, he had probably experienced much of that species of Melancholy which proceeds from the mental exhaustion and dissatisfaction, in which such studies often terminate: Regarded in this view, it is no inapt verification of the old adage, "The Painter paints *himself*."

It might have assisted to reconcile us to the defects of this performance, if Albert Durer had named it Study:—Or, if we could fancy the figure out of the picture, we might be content to let our attention dwell awhile, on the skill with which he has represented most of the other objects when abstractedly and severally considered. This talent however, of representing the characters and textures of individual objects, is still more conspicuous and somewhat less objectionable, in the print of St. Jerome

in the Room,* wherein all the objects are rendered with a fidelity little short of the the Camera obscura. Regarding the art as in its infancy, we may look at this engraving with the same kind of pleasure—and we should look at all the works of Art of this period, with the same candid indulgence, with which Reynolds contemplated the Virgin and Child by Van Eyck in the Cathedral church of Bruges—" the artist (says Sir Joshua) having accomplished the purpose *he* had in view."

Albert Durer is so conspicuous a figure in the Pantheon of Engraving, that I shall think it right to conduct you round him, as if we were examining an ancient Statue; and even occasionally to change the light and shade, and throw in reflections from other objects, for the sake of obtaining a more competent knowledge of our subject.

We are not dissatisfied with our Poet Spenser, because he is not Pope: On the

* So called by way of distinguishing it from another Engraving of this Saint, by the same artist.

contrary, we are rather pleased, and flattered (if I mistake not,) to find that our candour is called upon: We patiently attend to the minute detail of his lengthened processions, and we liberally grant him the free use of his whilom's, his ekes, his ayes, his eftsoons, and the whole vocabulary of his once poetical but now obsolete phraseology.

What Spenser is to Pope, the works of Albert Durer are to *the best* works of Bartolozzi, (whom till lately we could almost call our countryman,) the language of the art having since become in the same proportion, more copious and polished.—It may not therefore, be too much, to say that early works of art should be estimated with reference to the general state of art which preceded them, and the coexisting state of Art and Society—not be compared with what has appeared since, unless to answer some purpose of improvement; nor with the refined ideas of possible excellence, of the first modern artists: Newton himself, might else be thought obnoxious to censure, because he was uninformed of many facts

that are well known to the scientific gentlemen of this Institution.

I conceive it to be essential to my purpose, not to disregard either of these views, but, (as I have already intimated,) rather to aim at imparting critical information, than practical improvement: When therefore I may commend the works of a distinguished artist who lived at a distant period, I am not to be supposed to hold them up in the same degree, as objects of imitation to the students in art of the present day. But, if not his works, the energy of his mind—that power which enabled him to extend the radius of the golden compasses which heretofore circumscribed his art, is always a laudable object of emulation.

Every artist that is worthy of the appellation, desires, and endeavours by his works, that the average or general feeling of the Society to which those works address themselves, shall sympathise or accord with his own. With this view, while one is content to adopt the prevailing notions of

Beauty and Propriety, which exist in the minds of his contemporaries, and endeavour gradually to refine and raise them to the level of his own; another—warmed by a nobler enthusiasm, and perhaps of more fortunate education, dares exercise his profession for posterity, and leaving Time to toil after him, consoles himself but too often for present suffering and obscurity, with the distant hope,—the bright but ideal recompense, of posthumous Glory.

These two sets of motives however, have not always a separate existence, but mixed in various proportions and modified by circumstances, they operate as the grand stimuli to excellence in Art, and both Spenser and Durer combined them in no mean degree: they pleased and instructed their contemporaries, and events have shewn that they were not without reasonable hopes of pleasing posterity also.

Of those poets and professors of imitative art, who have seemed *far* to outstrip the taste and knowledge of their respective ages and

countries, I do not recollect any of whom we can say with certainty, that they were not greatly indebted for the superiority of their attainments, to the re-appearance of monuments of the Literature and Arts of former and more refined periods: Upon some principle of mental affinity, they have possessed a superior elective attraction for the beauty and essence of Antiquity, and by vigorously embracing the favourite daughters of Time past, have sent forth a progeny of power to anticipate and transmit the progress and the pleasures of Time to come.

When we consider that these opportunities and advantages, were nearly denied to Albert Durer as a Painter, and utterly denied to him as an Engraver, it will appear surprising how much he has accomplished: How much original talent he has shewn: How much intuitive insight into Nature; the practical energies of his*

* The difference between the professor Fuseli and myself, respecting the merits of Albert Durer and some other of the

Art, and the possible analogies between them.

There is something grateful to our feelings, in the exercise of that power which enables us to transport our minds back to the period at which Durer engraved, and Spenser wrote: The perception that the language (as well as thoughts) of the latter, was *then* highly poetical, seems to reflect a flattering warmth on the mild triumphs of those who are conscious partakers of the subsequent progress of intellectual refinement. To read and to enjoy Albert Durer requires no more than this, and will gratify our taste and discernment no less: If any one of his performances were to be pointed

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the early Engravers, is rather apparent than real. It should be recollected that he had to speak of Durer's merits as a *Painter*, and to say how far his *example* when compared with the examples of the other old masters, was worthy of imitation by the Students in painting of the present day; I had to regard him as an *Engraver*, and to declare my opinion of the rank he ought to hold in the estimation of Collectors and Connoisseurs. It is one thing to point out what to do in an Art, and another how to appreciate what has formerly been done.

out as more particularly resembling Spenser, I think it should be the legendary tale of St. Hubert. They are characterised by the same romantic heights of extravagance; the same abundance of ideas; the same unremitted and successful attention to minute excellence; the same general air of incredibility rendered credible, and, as we should say now—if they were now produced for the first time,—the same want of concentration, brevity, and general effect; but a temporary adoption of the sympathies of the sixteenth century, as far as Art is concerned, reconciles us to these, and affords us an interest analogous to that with which we look back to the occupations of children,—reflecting the while, at once on our former and on our present selves.

Another of the most celebrated, though in my opinion, not the best, of Durer's engravings, is his Adam and Eve. He has in this instance (though I do not remark it as being a solitary instance) had recourse to Nature for his models, but his Eve is not "the fairest of her daughters," nor his

" Adam the goodliest of men since born :" Yet I think we may perceive that he selected from the Nature with which he was acquainted ; and though we do not behold the symmetry and superlative grace of Greek beauty, we probably see the felt and acknowledged beauty of Nuremberg.—It will also be allowed, that the Paradise they must shortly quit, does not seem very desirable to inhabit: Here is no genial light ; no luxuriance of vegetation, and no abundance of animal life.—To use more of the words of Milton, Nature is so far from wantoning as in her prime,—so very far from playing at will her virgin fancies, that she appears (in those of Shakespear) " bald with dry antiquity :"—Yet if Raphael has violated this cardinal principle of propriety, by erecting a church and houses two stories high, in *his* Paradise, who shall throw the first stone at Albert Durer?—The boles of his Trees, though among the first—if not the very first that were ever engraven, have much of the truth of individual nature, and their foliage and the fur of the Cat, are expressed with a degree of freedom that must

surprize those who reflect that no Etching has been employed, and how comparatively ill calculated are the sleek and stiff lines of the unassisted graver, to the expression of such objects. The introduction of the Cat and Mouse in Paradise, could not fail to be understood, from its familiarity, but though ingenious, this very familiarity rendered it unfit for the occasion. The prophet Isaiah has far more nobly expressed the primæval harmony and happiness of the brute creation.

The Eve of Albert Durer, is apparently of the same *family* that Otho Venius and Rubens afterward adopted for their models, and in the engraving which collectors call "the Death's-head," is a female figure which still more evidently shews the esteem in which Rubens must have held the works—or at least the women, of Albert Durer.

It is not easy to conceive the occasion that could have given birth to this mysterious print of the Death's-head. It presents us either the ordinary routine of human

life, in allegory, or perhaps a sort of poetic armorial bearing: The Crest is a winged Helmet, richly ornamented, and beautifully executed; and though a scull, which one should think could not fail to be an awful monitor, is highly embossed on the shield —the female Supporter—heedless of her charge—heedless of the moral lesson, and (I am afraid) of the moral character, she has to sustain, is obviously listening to the very suspicious suggestions of a sort of savage man. It appears to be one of the Night-thoughts of Albert Durer, and perhaps, like those of Dr. Young, may be intended to mark the lamentable influence of the grosser passions.

Whatever its author may have intended to inculcate by this Print, its execution as an engraving is admirable. The Helmet, with all its pomp of Heraldic appendage, and the actual and reflex lights on its polished surface, are characteristically, though minutely, expressed; the Scull is accurately drawn, and its bony substance is described with a masterly hand—the author has even

sedulously attended to the finer enamel of its two remaining teeth. The head of the Savage, with its beard and wild redundance of snaky tangled hair, has considerable and well managed breadth of light and shade, though its character is far less savage than should seem to belong to the rest of the figure:—Its expression is doubtless meant to be assumed and insinuating. The countenance of the Female, I presume to think has seldom been surpassed for that successful mixture of character and expression, that lends a willing ear to a delusive promise; and the hands of both figures are far better drawn than we have hitherto seen among the productions of the German school: the drapery also, which we have been accustomed to see stiff, starched, and complicated, is here relaxed into freedom and simplicity, and is so remarkable for silky texture; approaches so near to what is now termed picturesque composition of forms and light and shade, and is on the whole so superior to that of his Melancholy, and some other of his subsequent works, as leaves us, either to wonder that Albert

Durer having once attained, should ever lose sight of the excellence of its principles; or to infer that he did not perceive their excellence, or that the science he deduced from his own observation of Nature, prevailed but occasionally over the prejudices of his education.

In his small prints of the life of Christ, of which Marc Antonio is said to have pirated the copy-right, other instances occur of this style of superior simplicity in the draperies, and some of broad and captivating effects of light and shade: His Jesus Christ suffers greatly, or beams with Godlike benevolence; his Magdalens and Madonas are sometimes divinely pathetic; and many other of the heads in these interesting and often grand compositions, are exquisitely finished miniatures, remarkable for that sort of accordance and consistency of parts, which we deem the internal evidence of Truth and Nature.

I must refer those who may be desirous of inspecting Albert Durer's portraits, to the

Cracherode collection: It contains those of himself; Frederick Duke of Saxony; Erasmus, and several others: all of them transcending the art of that time, and consequently the impartial expectations of *this*. In point of drawing, they possess the same internal evidence of correctness which distinguishes the best of his historical heads; in style they are laboured, but the labour is not ill bestowed; and the *chiaroscuro* is frequently comprehensive and clear.

The refined Art which is exercised in such high perfection by the best portrait painters of our own country and of the present day;—The Science which enables them, by combining in their utmost proportions the General with the Particular, to assert the dignity and maintain the dominion, of mind over matter, and of imitative Art over individual Nature, was then unfelt and unknown.—The German portraits of the latter end of the fifteenth century, can be expected to be no better than literal, fac-simile, unexalted likenesses, of the persons they would represent: They are not rendered, and not attempted to be

rendered, with the judicious abstraction of a wise magistrate selecting the essential points of the case before him, and anticipating your verdict, while he seems to submit evidence;—but rather with the anxiety and painful particularity of a witness at the Bar, who is sworn to tell the *whole Truth*, and *nothing but* the Truth: and it may be said in favour of Albert Durer, that he does not, like his competitors, appear to suffer from the recollection of his oath, but delivers what he has seen, with manly firmness and fidelity—without tormenting his memory for more, or seeming to have distressed his recollection for so much.

Otho Venius, the instructor of Rubens, appears to have studied the best both of Durer's historical heads, and his draperies, with advantage, and to have occasionally assisted the composition of his pictures with selections from the life of Christ, and such of the set of Apostles as I conceive Durer engraved after his return from Venice: and all succeeding engravers who have studied the works of Albert Durer,

have reaped equal advantage from observing the happy adaptation and various mixtures, of lines and stippling, which he has employed in representing the rugged or polished, hard or soft, flat, curved, or broken surfaces, of the various objects he intended to express.

We are now arrived at the period at which *Etching* began to be rudely practised. I incline to think—but am not certain, that Albert Durer was the first man who corroded a plate with aquafortis, so as to be printed with the rolling-press: *If* he was, no man on the whole, has been a greater benefactor to the art now under our consideration.

Evelyn is mistaken in dating this important invention from the *middle* of the sixteenth century: The earliest of Durer's prints, that is evidently the offspring of aquafortis, and impressed from the corroded lines, is dated 1516; and in two years after, appeared his more celebrated Etching of the march of an army, which has been called

"The Cannon," from a piece of ordnance forming the principal object on the foreground. Both these etchings are reported to have been performed on plates of iron or steel.

His Etchings are far more free and fearless than might have been expected from first attempts in a new Art, and from the anxious precision and incessant attention to the minutiæ, with which he laboured his engravings. He seems to have considered Etching, when compared with Engraving, as of minor importance—as a sort of plaything, and in aiming at less, has in some respects, really accomplished more than he could possibly have done with his graver: but he appears to have *bit in* or corroded his plate all at once, and not to have thought of producing gradation of shade, either by partial stoppings out, or the increased pressure of his Etching-needle. Neither does he seem to have conceived the idea of afterward improving either the polish of such objects as might require it, or the *chiaroscuro* of his etchings, by means of

the graver. Hence, there is nothing to assist us in supposing the distance recedes from the foreground, but the diminution of the sizes of his objects—hence also what is meant for sky, is without air: but the cannon itself with its carriage, the stony ground, and the winding of the road through the middle ground, are not ill expressed, and the village and distant country, are drawn with a masterly hand.

Lucas van Leyden blended more than the faults with less than the merits of his friend Albert Durer. He has the same redundance of stiff angular drapery; the same want of advertence to the figures it should cover; the same vulgar choice of forms, and more than the same general Gothic gusto, which distinguish the worst of Durer's performances, without his copiousness of invention, his occasional vigour, or his accurate observation of individual nature.—Yet, is he in some instances so superior to himself, that if I had seen no other of the works of Lucas than early impressions of his David with the head of Goliah, or David

playing before Saul, I should have thought myself warranted in endeavouring to vindicate Lucas van Leyden, from the aspersions of him who should thus traduce his reputation.

I have passed over Francis van Stoss, Michael Wolgemuth, Jacob Walsh, and Israel van Mecheln, because their works afforded nothing elementary—nothing that could lead us to a gradual acquaintance with the essentials of the art: Scarcely a single ray of Taste or Intelligence beams athwart the Gothic gloom, in which their German patience is enveloped. I shall (not for the same reason, but for reasons allied to it) pass lightly for the present, over the performances of the immediate successors, and for the most part, imitators, of Albert Durer, —generally reckoned among those whom the French, from the smallness of their productions, have termed the *little* masters.— Aldegrever, Altdorfer, Penz, and the Behams made no new discoveries, but they occasionally improved upon Durer, by contemplating, and incorporating with their styles,

the superior drawing of the schools of Florence and Rome; in which respect Aldegrever and Penz, who studied for a time under Marc Antonio, excelled their competitors.

I do not propose any thing *quite* so tedious, as to conduct you step by step through the unprofitable wanderings of an Art, that has long travelled without roads, without indices, and without light, but rather to select such prints for your observation, and submit such observations to your notice, as may enable us to ascertain its track, and perhaps mark its actual progress by a few simple lines.—I shall therefore conclude for the present, with a brief summary of the journey we have made to-day.

The progress of the art of producing engraved prints on paper, has been from wood-engraving, which commenced with a mere rude outline, of which my Lord Spencer's tablet is a curious specimen, and was followed by attempts at shadowing—at first

by a single course of lines, or hatchings. Wolgemuth, the preceptor of Albert Durer, soon discovered the means of crossing this first course of lines in the deeper shadows, with a second, and sometimes with a third course, so as in the hands of Albert Durer himelf, to imitate spirited pen and ink drawings, with great success. This art of delivering dark crossings from the surface, is lost to the modern Engravers, or at least cannot be performed on wood without occupying so much time and requiring so much care, as would far exceed the advantage.

Engraving on copper, and printing from the incisions, did not grow out of this branch of the Art, but from such ornamental engraving as had long been practised by the monks of the middle ages, and more recently by the goldsmiths, combined with the discovery of the rolling-press. But its superior powers and obvious susceptibility of refinement, had in some degree supplanted the former Art, even before the invention or discovery of *Etching* so as to print with the rolling-press.

Etching afforded a means analogous to the objects themselves, of drawing and describing all those objects of which wildness and freedom communicated by spontaneous perception and feeling, is the Soul; yet from the prevalence of those habits and prejudices of education which have been already noticed; which hang like dark veils about the faculties of man; which have been called second nature, but which are perhaps more properly first nature; the extent and variety of its energies, were not perceived for a considerable time, if they be even yet perceived: The *means* of engraving, or the manual operation of the graver, was mistaken for the end; and hence a false criterion of merit obtained considerable influence, and to the great hindrance of the improvement of the Art, long continued to maintain it. Connossieurs gravely put on their critical spectacles, in order to see in what degree, and how dexterously, the etcher had imitated the clear and clean-cut lines of the graver; just as the first printers merely endeavoured to imitate MS missals, without perceiving the

superior degree of perfection of which printing was susceptible; or as (by a similiar misapprehension) some persons have lately attended the theatre, not for the moral of the Drama, nor the merits of the Poet—not to compare the efforts of the performers with their own ideas of nature and propriety; but for the mere purpose of seeing how far the irregular freedom and spontaneous sallies—the wild varieties of one representative of King Richard or Hamlet, imitated, or deviated from, the undeviating and inimitable precision of another.

About the close of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, a new mode of engraving, of which I have reserved the notice—or rather a combination of the two modes I have already mentioned, made its appearance, and Mair, the disciple of Martin Schön, may contest with Hugo da Carpi, the Italian painter, the merits of having been the first to combine in the same performance, both modes of engraving and printing, and of having invented that process which successfully imitates drawings washed with

bistre or Indian ink, and to which the title of engraving in *chiaroscuro*, was at that time *exclusively* and *therefore* improperly applied. Having slightly engraved his proposed subject on copper, marking only the outlines and deeper shadows, Mair printed it from the incisions: he then prepared a block or tablet of wood, upon which he carved out the extreme or high lights, and then impressed ink or colour from its surface, upon the former print, taking care to secure the coincidence of the plate and block, in the printing, by a mechanical contrivance. By these means, a middle-tint, which was frequently of brown, was apparently washed over a pen and ink drawing, and the extreme lights appeared as if heightened with white paint or crayon. Very good imitations of Painters sketches and cartoons were thus produced, and Hugo da Carpi, by means of an additional block and more competent powers of drawing, was enabled to add another tint, and to produce those bold imitations of the sketches of the Italian painters (particularly those of Raphael) which have gained him a more

extensive and lasting reputation, than the best of his original pictures.

Respecting one of his pictures, there is a short story upon record, which it may be worth digressing to repeat. In his zeal to display extraordinary powers, or to obtain extraordinary praise, Da Carpi took it into his head to reject his pencils, and to paint an Altar-piece, in which he laid on the colours *im*mediately with his fingers. The picture being brought to Michael Angelo, and his opinion importunately requested, he simply observed that "it would have been better had he used his pencils." From this mild but forcible reproof of Michael Angelo, the admirers of prints imitated in needle-work, and other similar exhibitions, where Folly has created difficulty in the affectation of displaying Art, may extract a salutary lesson.

I believe that certain linen-drapery and paper-hangings, are now printed nearly in the same way with the engravings of Mair and Da Carpi. By the same process and

by other processes, more recent but not more ingenious, very plausible imitations of painters' sketches, and sometimes of the sketches of those who are far from being painters, have been produced. Imitations, or mock representations of their first thoughts, confusedly mingled with their after-thoughts and corrections, have been made to pass current for taste and versatility of invention; "shameless bravura of hand," has been mistaken for boldness and freedom; and vague and gross smearings, and palpable neglect of form, have been palmed upon the public for "grace beyond the reach of Art," and "glorious departure from vulgar bounds."

It may be remembered that this fashionable but unfounded attachment to vague and slovenly prints which have usurped the name of Engravings, (and from which we cannot but apprehend danger to the unformed taste of a certain amiable and highly interesting class of society) has already engaged some portion of our attention. But, lest any part of my audience

should confound the use with the abuse of this species of art, it may not be improper to add, that the student may indulge his imagination, and perhaps refine his taste, upon sympathetic principles, by occasionally following the rapid flights of the artist's unbridled fancy; and the legitimate collector, disregarding the surreptitious value that mere rarity is sometimes supposed to bestow, may wish to possess these, while he sees or believes that the sketch or the scrap, is faithfully rendered or really by the hand of the master: but neither of these votaries of taste, will mistake the beginnings for the ends of art, and both will desire, by comparing the first thoughts with the mature reflections of the painter, to trace his intellectual progress.

LECTURE V.

Of the rise and early progress of Engraving in modern Italy—Patronage of the Medici—Of the first Florentine engravings, the performances of Baldini, Boticelli, and Pollajuoli—Of the resurrection of ancient Sculpture, and its effects on Italian Art—Of Andrea Mantegna—Critical observations on his labours of Hercules; Bacchanalian procession; Battle of Tritons; Triumph of Julius Cæsar; and Dance of Females—Of a curious allegorical Print designed, but not engraven by Mantegna—Practical separation of the art of Engraving from that of Painting—Of Marc Antonio—Peculiarity of his talents, and progress of his studies—Critical observations on his slaughter of the Innocents; Dead Christ, and Virgin of the Palm, after Raphael; and Martyrdom of St. Laurence, after Bandinelli—Error of Picart respecting the merits of Marc Antonio—Uses of modern Engraving, and Mistakes respecting those uses—Influence of Pleasurable stimuli—Observations on the state of the public Taste for the art of Engraving, and for Art in general.

LECTURE V.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I last had the honour of addressing you, I endeavoured to mark the progress in Germany, of that Art which enables us to transfer to paper and spread through the known world, all that is essential in the Arts of Imitation and Design. I gave to Germany that priority to which on the whole she appears to possess a sort of dubious title—considering this point as of very inferior importance, when compared with the real advancement of Engraving, and the proportionate advantages it is calculated to confer on Society. I return to the names, the time, and the highly favoured country, of Finiguerra, Baldini, and Boticelli.

The elegant and philosophical historian of the illustrious family of Medici has remarked, with a pleasure which he must enjoy in the highest perfection, the fortunate coincidence between the discovery of printing with the letter-press, and the reappearance of the classic Poets and Historians. That pleasure is pre-eminently his: It may be yours to notice the no less fortunate concurrence between the inventions of Copper-plate engraving and printing; the resurrection of ancient Sculpture; and the general resuscitation of Art, which about the same time improved the condition of Italy; and has since gratified the Taste, enlightened the Understanding, and contributed more than any other cause to maintain the intellectual superiority, of Europe over the rest of the world.

The present state of things is the consequence of the former: and if it be natural to inquire the source of the evil that we suffer, it should be delightful to trace the origin of the good that we enjoy. "The successive advances of Science, (says Dr. John-

son) the vicissitudes of Learning and Ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings; the extinction and revival of Arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world, are the most generally useful parts of history: THOSE WHO HAVE STATES TO GOVERN, HAVE UNDERSTANDINGS TO CULTIVATE."

Of those who *had* to cultivate understandings, the fifteenth century beheld in the family of Medici, the gratifying, but rare, spectacle of magistrates who were duly sensible of the importance of this part of their trust: and it may be esteemed no trifling advantage to the Art of Engraving and its early Italian professors, that it arose at Florence, under the auspicious patronage of a man whose zeal and whose taste for Art, were equally exemplary—"a merchant who governed the Republic without arms; whose credit was ennobled into Fame, and whose riches were dedicated to the service of mankind."*

* Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Chap. 66.

You are probably aware that the disinterestedness of the views of Lorenzo de' Medici has sometimes been disputed, as well as the grandeur of his Taste. While Cosmo has enjoyed—*perhaps* deservedly, the praise of superior liberality and discernment, Lorenzo is accused of having misemployed Michael Angelo, and neglected Leonardo da Vinci: but who could have patronised Michael Angelo?—During the lapse of three centuries, even the most aspiring have voluntarily yielded to him the loftiest station in the most exalted sphere of Art, and the warm admiration of the first Judges, by proclaiming his superiority, has sanctioned his Fame. Adequately to have patronised so great an artist, would have required a mind as vast as his own, possessed of commensurate means of encouragement: and where shall they be found?—The candid will pause at least, ere they blame for not having done more, a Nobleman who has done so much for Art as Lorenzo the Magnificent.

The disappointment of Lorenzo in his

attempts to restore the practice of Mosaic painting, was amply compensated by the spontaneous appearance of an Art, "which (in the words of his accomplished biographer) has given to the works of the Painter, that permanency, which even the durability of Mosaic might not perhaps have supplied."*—We may add to this praise of its permanency, that *portability*, and that *publicity*, which it was impossible that Mosaic should ever supply.

That a Florentine goldsmith, should in the year 1460, have discovered a mode of producing on paper, impressions from engravings on metal, is by no means irreconcileable with the previous existence of printing in Germany. Nothing, however, of Finiguerra's engraving or printing remains to testify this fact, unles a print in the Cracherodean collection marked T. F. F. which has by some persons been supposed to stand for *Thomaso Finiguerra fecit*, might

* Roscoe's life of Lorenzo de' Medici. Vol. 2. p. 222. Edit. 1795.

be believed to be his performance: but Mr. Cracherode has, by a note in the margin, with more probability in my opinion, attributed this print, notwithstanding these initials, to Andrea Mantegna.

An edition of the Inferno of Dante, printed at Florence in the year 1481, has long been supposed to contain the earliest Italian engravings, excepting the *maps* to an edition of Ptolemy,* of which the date is ascertained, and to have been the first book ever embellished with copper-plate prints in which human figures, or other natural objects, were attempted to be represented. This is, however, a mistake. The extensive and well chosen bibliographical collection of Earl Spencer, contains a more perfect book, printed also at Florence, (by Niccolo Lorenzo della Magna) but in the year 1477—which is four years anterior to the Dante. Its title is *Monte Santo di Dio;* its author Antonio

* Printed at Rome in 1478.

Bettini bishop of Fuligno; and of the three Engravings it contains, one is much larger than the embellishments of Dante.

The prints which accompany both these books, are the joint performance of Baldini and Boticelli, and none of them discover much skill either in the design or execution. The same artists have also engraven a set of the prophets, single figures, and a much larger plate than had yet appeared in Italy, of which the subject is the last Judgment, and where the damned are represented in separate places of torment which resemble ovens, each inscribed with a particular Vice. But it must be added, that these Engravings—indeed, all the works of Baldini and Boticelli, are Gothic, vulgar, and inferior to those of their northern contemporaries: tending strongly to confirm an observation I had occasion to lay before you in my last Discourse, namely, that before they had the opportunity of studying from ancient Sculpture, the Italian artists were far from being superior to those of Germany.

A few wretched Greeks, impelled by the disasters of the Eastern empire, are said to have sought and found refuge in Italy, and to have brought with them the poor remains of the Arts of Design, at a time when (as Mr. Richardson has observed) "it was as much beyond the ability of any European to delineate a human figure, a tree, or any other natural object, as it is now to make a voyage to the moon."* Some of these miserable performances remain to this day, and attest the *suffering*, though not the Country, of their authors: and from this low and depraved condition, Baldini and Boticelli, succeeding to Cimabue, Giotto, Philippo Lippi, and Masaccio, assisted to work out the redemption of Art.

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* Perhaps Mr. Richardson has here gone *rather* too far. I have shewn in my second Discourse, that Art was not at this time utterly extinct in Europe, but that the engraving of metal seals and dies for money, preserved its latent embers through the darkest periods. The Greeks seem only to have re-introduced the use of *colours*, which they mingled in their pictures with gilding.

All the works of these early Engravers that have fallen under my observation, are dirtily printed, as if the method of clearing off the superfluous ink from the plates was but imperfectly known. Their outlines are hard, their shadows produced by crossings done with the graver in various directions but without Art; and in some instances the same composition, by representing more than one point of time, distracts the attention of the spectator.

Antonio Pollajuoli, who was also of Florence, may with more propriety be called an Artist. From the antique Sculpture, which was now beginning to re-appear, he seems to have learned attention to the *Anatomy* of his figures: to which most important requisite of historical art, Pollajuoli has the distinguished honour of having been the first to attract critical attention. He has shewn his predilection for this study, by representing the conspirators naked in the medal which he cut to commemmorate the assassination of Juliano, and the attack

on Lorenzo de' Medici; and also in a much larger Engraving than had hitherto been executed, of which the subject is a battle, and wherein he has represented all the combatants naked. There is an impression of this very scarce Print, in the Cracherodean collection, printed on reddish paper: each figure is nearly eleven inches in height; the heads have some faint dawning of expression, and the shadows are produced without crossings, by diagonal lines apparently done to imitate the hatchings of a pen, and in the same direction in which it is customary to write: but the outlines and shadows are dry and hard, and the forms vulgar and heavy. It is only by comparing Pollajuoli with his contemporaries and predecessors, that we learn to respect his performances; and it has even been said of his most celebrated work, (the martyrdom of St. Sebastian) that it "exhibits only a group of half naked and vulgar wretches, discharging their arrows at a miserable fellow-creature, who by changing places with one of his murderers, might with equal propriety

become a murderer himself:"*—so little attention was paid, even in Italy, at this early period, to character and expression.

Andrea Mantegna, by his more intimate knowledge of the antique, and his superior use of that knowledge, improved the drawing, without materially altering the style of engraving, of Pollajuoli. Indeed, as the local energies and practical perfections of Painting, were at this time so imperfectly developed, it was much more natural, and in the same degree more wise, for engraving to imitate pen and ink drawings, than to imitate pictures: and the best of Mantegna's prints derive a peculiarity of character and of value, from this circumstance. By intermingling the appearance of the finer strokes of the pen as it is worked upward, in his shadows, he softened and mellowed the stronger lines, so that the whole became a more appropriate vehicle of the *obscurity* he had in view; and the exact similarity of his style of engraving,

* Roscoe's life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. 2. p. 190.

to his own mode of drawing, with which I have the satisfaction of enabling you to compare it,* sufficiently shews that to imitate *pen and ink Drawings* was the boundary of his aim.

Art now began to shed its genial influence and its kindling lustre on the plains of Italy, and from the ruins of ages arose those master-pieces of Sculpture, which had been the gradual result of ages of study. The Tiber, the Arno, and the Po, smiled to reflect those forms of celestial purity, which had once graced the shores of the Archipelago, and the banks of the Ilyssus: and the palace and gardens of Lorenzo the Magnificent, aspired to emulate those Athenian groves of immortal memory, where Art and Philosophy went hand in hand with the Muses and the Graces.

"The example of Lorenzo extended itself

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* A pen and ink drawing by Mantegna, which is mentioned in the subsequent pages of this Discourse, was exhibited in the Lecture-room.

in concentric circles." Favoured by such advantages, and fostered by the illustrious patronage of the Marquis of Mantua, Andrea Mantegna raised himself from the humble occupation of a shepherd, to the honour of Knighthood; to that of being the instructor of Correggio; and to the first rank among the Italian artists of his time.

His Engravings are not few: but, considering the early period at which they were performed, are much more extraordinary than numerous. The two labours of Hercules in the Cracherodean collection, of which one has the initials of Finiguerra, and the other no mark at all, ought, I should conceive, to be reckoned among the earliest works of Mantegna. Like those of Pollajuoli, they are printed on reddish paper: and are in Engraving, what Layer Marney towers, and some other of our earliest brick buildings, are in English Architecture; whose authors had seen and endeavoured to avail themselves of the beauties of Greek and Roman edifices, without departing from their earlier Gothic edu-

cation. His Bacchanalian procession has still some considerable remains of Gothic grossness; but he has here shewn his talent in composition; and the fore-shortenings that occur are far better expressed than we have hitherto seen. The composition of his battle of Sea-gods and Tritons, is wildly grand; with such a mixture of the grotesque,* as may seem not improperly to belong to a subject which we should esteem out of Nature, or beyond the limits of the material world. The combatants in this battle are the offspring of his own fertile and vigorous fancy, generated by the sculpture of antiquity: Beside the Tritons and Sea-monsters, here are the general forms of horses and men, but, like the fauns and sylvan deities of the Greeks, their natures partake of the element in which they exist—at least, the spectator is led to perceive that this intention existed in the mind of the Artist, and that (in the words of Ariel's song) they have

* By the *Grot*-esque, I do not mean the ludicrous, but the mixed style of those ancient works discovered in the Italian Grottoes, from whence the term is derived.

undergone " a sea change, into something rich and strange." Instead of hair, sea-weed decorates the human heads; and the fins and scales of marine animals help to constitute the horses and Tritons. Their weapons too are congenial with themselves: they fight with fish and fish-bones, and the scull of some unknown inhabitant of the deep serves as a shield.

The heads of the horses, as well as those of the Sea-gods, are animated by no inconsiderable portion of the ideal grandeur of the Antique: the anatomical markings—the constant object of Mantegna's attention, are also successfully studied from the same inestimable source of information: and in the early impressions, such as may be seen in that valuable collection of the late Mr. Cracherode,* to which I have had frequent occa-

* The Rev. Clayton Cracherode, the donor to the Public of this extensive collection, was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Cracherode, who commanded the land forces under Lord Anson, in his celebrated expedition. He was educated at Westminster school, and afterward became a stu-

sion to refer, the *chiaroscuro* has more breadth, as well as depth, than seems to belong to the Italian art of this early period, and is conducted through the whole with masterly address.*

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dent of Christ Church, Oxford. He took the degree of M. A. and acquired some Church preferment, which he conscientiously relinquished on becoming possessed of a large fortune by inheritance; but continued a student of Christ Church, and a trustee of the British Museum to the time of his death. That he was handsome in his person, may be seen, in the only portrait (by Edridge) for which he ever sat, which is in the possession of Lord Spencer; and the epithet of "mild Cracherode," by which the author of the Pursuits of Literature has distinguished him, will inform Posterity that he was amiable in his manners. It was his pleasure to seek, and his ambition to possess, the most curious Books, Prints, Drawings, Coins, &c. that were any where to be found: and if the traders in Art and Literature, succeeded in attracting any portion of that attention which is due to merit toward margin-measuring and rarity, it is enough that their success with Mr. Cracherode is noticed in the Pursuits of Literature. To the pointed Satire or the mild reproof of that Author, it is not necessary to add.

* Mr. Strutt, and I believe the foreign writers also, who have mentioned this work of Andrea Mantegna, have spoken of it as being *two* prints; but it is clear by putting the two together that Mantegna intended them as *one*, which from some motive of convenience (probably the largeness of its dimensions) he has engraven on two plates.

A more slow and sedate magnificence moves his triumphal procession of Julius Cæsar. The wild imagination which revels in his recesses of the ocean, and his Bacchanalian processions, is nearly excluded from hence: it but serves, in the flaming of the Candelabra, to gleam through "the spoils of Nations, and the pomp of Wars;" or faintly discovers itself in other subordinate accessories as the fringed ornament of stately grandeur.*

In his Dance of females, he has shewn so much of the graceful simplicity and general air of Greek sculpture, as to give rise to a belief that it has been copied from an antique basso-relievo: but till such a basso-relievo is shewn, it would be unfair in us to resign so much of the merit of Andrea Mantegna, as this composition may claim. These three Engravings, abundantly demonstrate the wide range of his technical

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* This Procession is engraven on nine plates. The original of the whole may be seen in the Royal collection at Kensington Palace.

and inventive powers; and shew with what success he could combine, or separately exhibit, Elegance, Wildness, and Grandeur, as occasion admitted or required.

Some critics have thought that Mantegna's admiration of the Antique was too predominant in his works; that it too frequently *engrossed* his powers; and hurried him too entirely away from that contemplation of Nature, which I believe, must always be one of the parents of originality in Art. Yet, if this enthusiasm be a fault, it is a fault proceeding so necessarily, and so immediately, from the localities of time and place, and the redundance of his merits, that it is as secure of pardon from the candid, as those merits are of praise.

There is a very singular allegorical print attributed to Andrea Mantegna, and generally to be found in the collections of his works; but of which the *Engraving* should, in my opinion, be ascribed to some inferior hand; and perhaps to that of the goldsmith, Finiguerra. That the *Design* is his, I have

no doubt. The general superior style of handling and drawing; the antique airs of the heads; (particularly those of Truth, Calumny, Insidiousness, and Mistrust) and the respectable testimonies I shall presently adduce; are the proofs upon which this assertion may be confidently grounded: and the difference in the style of hatching the shadows, between this engraving and those which are certainly by the hand of Mantegna, combined with its palpable inferiority to the original Drawing, amounts in my mind to the most perfect conviction that Andrea Mantegna is not the engraver of this print.

The *Drawing* is an attempt to revive a lost picture of Apelles, which, but that its memory has been perpetuated by Lucian, had long since been lost in oblivion. I have thought an account both of its subject and its history worth your attention; and the more so as both have relation to eminent Artists: I take the former from a MS record on the back of the Drawing, which I believe is the hand writing of the late

celebrated collector, Mr. Barnard. "Lucian describes an allegorical Picture painted by Apelles, of which his own misfortunes were the subject. He was falsely accused by Antiphilus, a contemporary artist who envied his abilities, of having entered into a conspiracy against King Ptolemy. [Happy had it been for mankind, had Ptolemy been the only king, and Apelles the only painter, who had been thus abused.] The monarch enraged, was very near putting Apelles to death; but that one of the real conspirators compassionating him, undeceived the King: who, repenting of his credulity, gave Apelles an hundred talents, and his accuser to be his slave.—Andrea Mantegna made this Drawing from the description of Lucian. The King, distinguished by his crowned head and extraordinary ears, is sitting on the left; the two figures near him are Mistrust and Ignorance: the first figure facing him, is Envy, conducting Calumny, who has a burning torch in her right hand, and under whom Mantegna has written *Calumnia di Apelles:* She drags accused Innocence by the hair: Deceit

follows, dressing her up; and insidious Villainy urging her on: lastly, Truth and Penitence close the procession."

It seems often to have been the fortune of this very curious Drawing, to have belonged to some distinguished Artist. It was once in the possession of Rembrandt, who has left a copy of it by his own hand: It has since belonged to Richardson, the painter; and to Arthur Pond; and is now, as well as Rembrandt's copy, the property of the President of the Royal Academy.*

The next Engraver of decided talent that Italy produced was Marc Antonio Raimondi, of Bologna; whose name marks a memorable æra in the History of Engraving.

The progress and separation of the arts of embellishment have been similar to those of necessity and accommodation. In the

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* Mr. West was President, at the time this Discourse was delivered.

early and rude ages of Society, every man was obliged occasionally to exercise, with the imperfect skill he might possess, every kind of manual labour or employ to which his wants had given birth: He was by turns Carpenter, Potter, Basketmaker, and Husbandman.—So in the early state of the Fine Arts, the Professor, as occasion required, was Painter, Engraver, Chaser, and in some instances Statuary, Architect, and Poet also: for these arts are all, either analogically or really; either mediately or immediately; dependent on the same first principles.

But a more wise, because more useful œconomy of distribution, is gradually elaborated, by the ardour of Genius and Enterprise, from social experience. It has by degrees been perceived that Arts, though analogically or really inseparable in theory, may, with advantage to Society, be divided in practice: and that, even when thus separated, every art claims the full vigour and expansion of every mind devoted to its pursuit.

In less than fifty years from the discovery of Copper-plate printing,—the resurrection of the Antique; the liberal patronage of the Medici; and the transcendent merits of the Roman and Florentine artists; disclosed more extensive views of practical attainment, and new provinces of Art. Hence, when the general good of Society called for subdivision, the sister Arts, whose object is that general good, found pleasure in obedience: and when the admiration of Europe was excited by the divine works of Raphael, so often and so deservedly the subjects of the highest praise, the good sense of Marc Antonio perceived at once the expedience and propriety of devoting himself and his art to their *Translation*.

Of *Drawing* (or the delineation of Form) which is the prime element of early Italian Engraving, words alone can impart but slender knowledge. To all that words could teach, I have listened with you upon a late occasion; and obtained both pleasure and

improvement:* but it is worthy of your notice, that excepting this cardinal requisite, which, as I have already explained, was a sort of geographical or local advantage, the Italian engravers of this period were less qualified for the task of translating (at least for that of translating what may be termed the eloquence of Painting) than their Northern contemporaries. That distribution of shade and of actual and reflex light, which, uniting and concentrating attention, constitutes effect; and that art of expressing the various textures of substances, which may be called the descriptive part of the translation of picture; were both exercised with far more considerable skill, (as you have seen) by the German, Dutch, and Flemish, than by the Italian, engravers.—Yet was the talent of Marc Antonio so well adapted to translate, or engrave after, those masters who did *not* unite their pictures by any pervading system of Light and Shade, nor add the fascinations

* Mr. Opie's Lecture on Drawing, had preceded the delivery of this, a few evenings.

of harmonious colouring, that many critics have doubted, and some have even denied, that Raphael has since been so faithfully rendered as by him: for though modern engravers have far excelled him in other respects, none perhaps have equalled, and certainly none have exceeded, the truth, purity, and spontaneous grace of his Outline; which is so perfectly that of Raphael, that it has been affirmed (though without sufficient evidence) that Raphael himself corrected them on the copper. But his singular print of St. George and the Dragon, (which is one of his youthful performances, and either after his first master, Raibolini, or from his own design) will serve to shew how much Marc Antonio improved in this respect, by contemplating the works, and attending to the instructions, of Raphael.

Travelling to Venice for improvement, Marc Antonio saw there with admiration, and copied with tolerable fidelity, Albert Durer's prints from the life of the Virgin. The copies (as is generally, if not necessarily the case with copies) are inferior to the

originals; yet, the sale of these obtained him considerable profit; though in the opinion of some, this profit was enjoyed at the expense of a proportionate deduction from his moral reputation. It is upon record, that Durer felt this conduct on the part of Marc Antonio, as an injury; and travelled from Nuremberg to Venice to seek redress: and it is also on record that the redress he obtained, had reference only to his future fame. Either Albert Durer was too noble minded to require pecuniary recompense from so poor and so ingenious a man as Marc Antonio; or it may be the Senate of Venice wanted the power, or perhaps the discernment, to award it; or (in charity to Marc Antonio we may add) perhaps the case did not appear to the senate to require it: for they simply forbad Marc Antonio any more to imitate the monogram of Albert Durer.

When Marc Antonio quitted Venice he went to Rome, where the mutual merits and mutual interests of Raphael and himself, soon introduced them to each other's

friendship, and here he remained engraving after the works of that great Painter, I believe with the exception of a few plates, of which the subjects are objectionable, from the designs of Julio Romano, and one after Bandinelli, till the year 1527; when the city of Rome was taken and plundered by the Spaniards, and Marc Antonio lost in the pillage, all the wealth he had accumulated by his profession. After this event, he is supposed to have retired to his native city of Bologna: but this is not certain: nor of his death is there any more recorded, than a vague report that he was assassinated by a Roman nobleman, in revenge for engraving, contrary to his engagement, a second plate from Raphael's slaughter of the Innocents.

This subject he certainly did engrave twice: the account of his death, is so far corroborated: and both the Engravings are here for your inspection. They are distinguished from each other by a few trifling variations, but which are objects of much note among the connoisseurs, and chiefly

by a small pointed tice, called by the Italians *la Felchetta*, which appears in the second, and does not appear in the first plate: the second is generally thought to be the best; but I think is only partially so; and that certain passages are better rendered in the first: among which we may reckon the principal naked figure, who has just drawn his sword; the terrified mother in the middle of the picture; and her, who at its right hand extremity, is resisting the murderer. Yet, in exhibiting these Prints, and requesting you to remark the merits of Marc Antonio, I cannot but anticipate that the pathos of Raphael will seize and detain your sympathies: Whilst contemplating "the palpitating Graces, the helpless Innocence, and the defenceless Beauty" of the mothers and children, I have little hope that the translator will obtain your attention, though he merits your approbation. Where the interest of the subject and the powers of the Painter, are so peculiar and extraordinary as in this instance, the Engraver, like the fair sex, must practise many excellent qualities in silence, and unseen

but by the discerning few; like them he must listen to the advice of the dying Pericles;* and like them he must cheerfully prefer the consciousness of deserving well, to the vanity of obtaining praise.

The style of Marc Antonio possesses not the exteriors of oratory, but he pronounces every sentence so distinctly; with a confidence so modest; and an emphasis so true to Raphael and to Nature; that those who attend, are convinced without being persuaded. To speak without a metaphor, there is something in his manner of employing his graver,—something dry, unambitious, unattractive to the sense; which, by all sound critics, has been thought to deserve praise without desiring it, and peculiarly appropriate to the works of a painter, who not merely does not require, but will not admit, "the aid of foreign ornament."

* I cannot recollect where I have read, that Pericles, on his death-bed, recommended to the women who were standing near him, to conduct themselves so as not to attract observation, nor become the subject of conversation one way or other.

The Dead Christ of Raphael, where the excess of his mother's sorrow is softened, but not subdued, by her divine resignation, he also repeated with variations; of which the principal are, that in the second, the Virgin Mary appears much younger than in the first, and her right arm divested of drapery, from which circumstance, it is known among collectors by the appellation of "the Virgin with the naked arm." The second plate is more delicately engraven, but is feeble, when compared with the masterly vigour he has shewn in the first. The nudities are here drawn with Marc Antonio's, inspired by Raphael's, usual superiority; but the drapery and ground, are softened and enriched beyond the ordinary powers of Marc Antonio's graver, and are so much in the improved style of his pupil George Penz, as may incline us to suspect that these parts have been engraven by his hand. A distinguished artist and critic—one of the few who are able to appreciate and declare the merits of Raphael, has said that his expression is decided by character;

and that he adapted form to character, in a mode, and with a truth, that leaves all attempts at emendation hopeless. Whether Raphael authorised or allowed Marc Antonio to substitute the younger Virgin, who seems more like the sister, for the elder, who *is* the mother of Christ, does not appear: there are no dates on the Cracherode impressions from which I remark, but from the above citation we may infer, that the elder Madonna is the real figure of Raphael; and that the second plate is what it is fashionable to call a free translation; done after the author's death.

In "the Virgin of the palm," Marc Antonio discovers, if possible, a still more exquisite feeling, and of course produces a more perfect translation, of Raphael. Christ is bestowing his benediction with the sublimity of inspiration; and St. John receiving ti with dignified and divine, though infantile, submission. The subordination of parts is just: the whole is perfectly graceful; and

the head of the Virgin Mary, the most graceful part of that whole.*

Marc Antonio's powers as an Engraver appear not to have declined from their acme, in his martyrdom of St. Laurence after Bandinelli. He not merely copied, but his long acquaintance with the works of Raphael enabled him, and his gratitude to Bandinelli who had obtained his release from prison disposed him, to improve the drawing of his original. The print is defective, yet not more so than many other of his works, in *chiaroscuro:* but expression of the textures of substances, and the existence of reflex light, are here feebly acknowledged; the folds of the draperies are ample; the drawing of the naked excellent; and the characters of the heads far better than would seem to belong to the reputation of Bandinelli.

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* I see reason to conjecture, that in this plate also he has been assisted by Penz.

I have thought it unnecessary to comment on many of this master's productions, because, in respect to Marc Antonio's, or the Engraver's, part, they are so nearly alike, that four score of his prints could scarcely afford a more satisfactory exhibition of his talent than the four now submitted to your notice. I have only briefly to re-state, that though he may seem deficient in reflex light and harmony of *chiaroscuro;* totally ignorant of the principles of rendering local colour in the abstract; and nearly so of those of expressing the various textures of substances; these are in him no more than light errors, that

" ——like straws upon the surface flow;
" Those who would search for pearls must dive below."

He certainly possessed considerable manual skill in the management of his graver, which was the sole instrument of *his* art; and in his knowledge of *drawing* went far beyond all his competitors.—Raphael was Marc Antonio's object; and the blandishments, the splendour, and the variety, which would have been indis-

pensably necessary to the translation of Correggio or Titian, were not called for here. In estimating his merits, Picart* should therefore have remembered—or rather, should have known, that the talent he so eminently possessed was precisely the talent that was necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose;—at least he should have recollected, that among the poets and sages of antiquity, the possession of even but a single worthy quality or endowment in a

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* Picart says of Marc Antonio and his scholars, that "the outlines of their figures when they worked from the designs of Raphael, are hard, equal lines; the engraving part is neat, but meagre," &c.—and Strutt observes with great truth of Picart, that it would have been better if he had never entered the field against the early Engravers, "or at least if he had ceased hostilities when he laid down his pen. But not contented with abusing their works, his vanity prompted him, in an evil hour, to take up the point and the graver, to convince the world how much it had been imposed upon. For this purpose he imitated the Etchings and Engravings of various masters, and called the work, "*The Innocent Impostors.*" But they sufficiently prove his want of abilities to execute the work in such a manner as to deceive an experienced judge."—Himself was probably the only person imposed upon by the *innocent* Impostors.

transcendent degree, was sufficient to constitute, in their opinions—a demi-god!

We have still to travel over a fertile, interesting, and extensive, portion of the art of Engraving: But, as I have to regret that my professional engagements scarcely allow me to hope that I shall be able to appear before you again in the course of the present season, I shall beg leave to close this discourse with a few remarks on the uses of modern Engraving; and on certain mistakes which, I am sorry to observe, prevail respecting those uses.

In the brief sketch of its history previous to the discovery of printing, I trust that some faint idea has been conveyed of the extensive benefits which the ancient modes of engraving have conferred on mankind: and it may easily be inferred that, had paper and its uses been known, the wisdom of Greece and Rome would have enlisted the modern art of Engraving in the service of Virtue.—We have only at present to inquire (and perhaps I ought to apologise for not attending to this

question before) what is the use of that art of Engraving, of which Printing is the proper termination? The answer will be short:—

It disseminates every valuable discovery in mechanical, chemical, agricultural, architectural, and astronomical, Science: It renders the scenery of remote countries, the distinguished features of our own, or the more delightful ideal scenery of highly gifted imaginations, familiar to every class of the community: By multiplying the vivid beams of embodied Intellect, which emanate from the mind of the poetic Painter, it becomes the radiance of his glory, and the organ of public instruction: It diffuses the fame, with the portraits, of the patriotic and illustrious: It consecrates and embalms the memory of the brave.

As a source of commercial benefit to the country, and of encouragement to the higher efforts of painting; and of the mutual increase of advantages these arts and that commerce might be made to confer on each other; I must forbear to speak at pre-

sent, though I have much to say: because the relaxed tone of the public taste, with respect to this art, and indeed with respect to art in general, seems more pressingly to require of me the unpleasant duty of exhibiting some small quantity of *mental bark and steel*.

There is a line often quoted by the venal advocates of those venal artists who are ever ready to degrade the dignity of their professions, by adapting what little talent they may possess to the momentary whims of wealthy ignorance, "that those who live to please, *must please* to *live*:"—which is so employed as to inculcate the ideas, that to amuse and to flatter those who are willing to pay for it;—to offer incense to those exalted beings who are content to be blinded by its smoke; are the proper aims and purposes of Art.—As these parasitical artists, (if Artists they may be called) are but so many reptiles crawling upon the flowery brink of deserved and certain oblivion, we might be content to leave them to their Lethean fate: but it must not be dissembled

that the public taste is but too strongly tinctured with this mistaken opinion: and though I cannot suppose that my humble efforts will add conviction to the excellent precepts on this subject, which have been so eloquently, yet, so fruitlessly delivered in the Lecture-rooms of the Royal Academy, I may still indulge the hope that what has there been urged in vain, or to little purpose, will here be listened to—if not with approbation, at least with complacency.

Art is Philosophy in her most fascinating* guise; teaching by examples—"Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness;"—but, she is the nurse of Independence, and the sister of Wisdom.—The true end and purpose of every art that is worthy of the appellation, is to Instruct; and Pleasure is the means she employs:—not that petty pleasure which proceeds from frivolity and prettiness; but that much grander emotion which is felt at the heart, and has the nearest affi-

* *So* fascinating that we have been induced to forget it *was* Philosophy.

nity with social happiness.—Pleasure, from the cradle to the grave, is the most effectual means of instruction, and should never have been separated from Virtue: to separate Pleasure from Virtue, was to sever the imagination from the judgment, and set at variance what ought to be united:—it was a barbarous separation of the head from the heart, dictated by those barbarous superstitions that in dark ages pervert Nature to enslave mankind; and mistakenly obeyed or repeated by those miscalled Philosophers, who have conspired to murder the mental part of man, in order to make a shew of its anatomy. It has been the constant bane of true taste, and intellectual culture.

To substitute the vain and tinsel glitter of individual personal ostentation, for the sterling gold of public utility;—what is it, but to melt all worthy sentiment and manly resolution, on the lap of Luxury, while we neglect the noble purposes of patriotic virtue and real refinement?—While many of the villas that surround

this great metropolis, and even many of the mansions of the metropolis itself, are covered with tasteless profusion and tawdry wonders, is it not true that the naval pillar still sleeps in its native quarry; and that the call of patriots, and princes, and the heroic strains of the harmonic and poetic* muses, have echoed in vain?—Is it not equally true that the walls of the Royal Academy annually blush at the absence of poetry and history, though the empire may boast the first painters in the world?—Nor is it less true, nor marks it less our general want of that Attic discernment, by which certain individuals are distinguished, that the print-shops are filled with vague trumpery smearings, contemptible caricatures, and nonsensical transparencies.

If such must be called pleasure, and such the pursuits of Art,—it is pleasure so diluted that true taste must nauseate the

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* Does the same regretted absence of grandeur of taste extend to the art of Music—indispensable as it seems to be to modern ears, and modern education?—Or why is not Dr. Busby's Naval Oratorio repeated?

draught. It is Art so prostituted—that we cannot repress our wishes, at least, for its speedy reformation, nor our endeavours to shew—

" How little they bested
" Or fill the fixed mind with all their toys."*

Though truth, and the interests of the good, which are inseparable from truth, oblige us to state these facts, we may still be proud to recollect, that of tasteful and benevolent minds, formed under the benignant influ-

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* I regret much that I have never seen till now (October 30, 1806) Mr. Valentine Green's Letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds, printed for Cadell, in 1782. Had I seen that Letter sooner I might have quoted it with advantage. I beg to refer the reader on the points before us to pp. 17, 18, &c. and in general to the whole pamphlet. In p. 22, Mr. Green, combating the supposed necessary connexion of Art with effeminacy and luxury, says " the only danger the Arts can present is, that we have already encountered, in their having been called in to idle and vain purposes, and made subservient to trivial pleasures and ostentatious parade, in which neither sentiment, or dignity, or national virtue, were appealed to." Since the delivery of this Lecture, it has been insinuated by the dealers in this meretricious trumpery, that I then said more on the subject than the occasion called for; but the reader will recollect that, notwithstanding the admonitions of Mr. Green, deli-

ence, and by the pleasurable excitement of those arts which embrace elegant and important instruction and extensive benefit, Great Britain possesses some eminent examples: These she should cherish, for to these, more than to any other cause, she will owe the continuance, the extension, and the temperance, of her greatness. It is for the sister Arts, in concert with such characters, to twist gold with the silken cords that connect natural with moral beauty; to mingle goodness with greatness; by supplying the means of cultivating the Imagination with the Judgment, to improve existence into felicity; to render the mind conscious of her highest energies, while they dilate the heart with benevolence.

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vered in 1782, the evil has gone on increasing: In Engraving, particularly, the comparatively few noxious weeds of 1782, have grown and disseminated beyond all precedent, till the field of the art is completely overspread with trivial, vulgar, unprincipled, productions. The day cannot surely be far distant that shall enlighten our darkness, and shew (in the words of Mr. Green) time abused, money dissipated, folly entertained, genius perverted, and the impious profanation of the divinity of Art.

LECTURE VI.

That the principal causes which have co-operated to retard the progress of British Engraving have been; First, the ignorant auspices under which the Art has hitherto existed in England: and, Secondly, the want of an ascertained Constitution of National Art, at the time of framing the laws of the London Royal Academy—The assertion admitted that Engraving has declined in this country, apparently under circumstances which ought to have effected its improvement—Fallacy of those appearances—Error of supposing that the change in favour of the British print trade was, or could have been, effected by men unskilled either to conduct or perform connected and extensive works of Art—That the real cause of that change was the preponderance of native and resident ability in the art of Engraving—That, from the time when mercantile speculators, intent only on profit, undertook to dictate the studies of the Artists, the profits of the commerce for Prints have declined—Developement and proofs of the destructive effects of ignorant superintendance—Error of those who suppose the attainment of wealth, to be the proper end of Art; and still greater error of submitting art to their guidance—Dangerous folly of confound-

ing national wealth with national happiness—Rarity of genuine critics in Art—Absurdity of supposing that persons educated to ignoble pursuits, and who have previously shewn neither taste nor talents in Art, can possibly be qualified to govern the pursuits of its professors—Apology for the credulity on these points, and backwardness of the Taste, of the Public—That the liberality of the public disposition to encourage ingenuity and promote Art, has failed of its intended purpose—This effect accounted for—That the second principal cause which has retarded the progress both of critical knowledge and practical skill in Engraving, is want of that academical culture by which the growth of other arts has been promoted—That the Academy in Europe which should most have cultivated Engraving, is the Academy in Europe where it is most neglected—Folly and impolicy of the Legislators of the London Academy—Grounds of hope that more enlightened and enlarged sentiments, and higher and juster principles will finally prevail—That public Academies of Arts are useful in proportion as they are calculated to ascertain, sanction, and promulgate, sound principles of Art; which must always be discovered by individuals—Historical testimony of the high value of Principle.

LECTURE VI.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

*IT will probably not be forgotten that toward the conclusion of my Discourse of last Thursday, I took occasion to offer a few sentences on the *Uses* of modern En-

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* This Lecture consists in substance, of what was originally the latter part of the fourth, and the beginning of a Lecture not publicly delivered, incorporated from a motive of bettering the arrangement of my materials. A few sentences have been added, in the hope of increasing the strength of the whole, and improving the connexion of its parts; but I can assure the reader that I have omitted no one word of what I publicly delivered in the Lecture-room. I have set down nought in malice, and shall nothing extenuate. I shall neither be deterred from printing the Lectures nor from adding the purposed Notes, notwithstanding that I have this day (November 5, 1806) been informed that a literary blunderbuss is loading against me.

graving, and on the prevalence of certain popular mistakes respecting those uses. My strictures on these points would be very imperfect, were I to omit noticing the causes of those mistakes: and if this be incumbent on me, I must hold myself at least equally engaged to develope and declare whatever other causes have conspired with these to retard the progress of British Engraving.

It is my first wish that these Lectures should be useful: and I cannot in my own opinion render them more so, than by entering upon an inquiry on which the advancement or decay of the valuable Art, which is the proper subject of our present attention, must materially depend. With whatever interest I have dwelt on its ancient history; with whatever pleasure I have contemplated its modern revival; I consider them both as of small importance when compared with its present condition in this country, and its future possible commercial advantages to Great Britain: and highly as I may estimate those advantages;

and much as I may calculate on (or rather hope for) their practical increase; I consider even them as trifling when compared with the moral benefits which the Art of Engraving is calculated to confer on Society. Antiquity may fade into oblivion: Commerce may perish: but I may safely and proudly call upon all good men to unite in wishing that every moral art should be immortal in its duration, and boundless in the scope of its energies.

On a comprehensive and philosophical view, therefore, of the whole of our subject, my Lecture of this evening should be of far more importance than any of those which have preceded it. What is long past is beyond our power: what has recently happened is immediately connected with the present state of things; and the present with the future.

I divide this Discourse under two heads: First, The auspices under which the Art of Engraving has hitherto existed in England: Secondly, The means which have

been resorted to for its cultivation; including a consideration of those advantages which have been withheld from it.

With respect to those recent occurrences connected with this Art to which I must necessarily advert, allow me to premise that it is a consideration, not of persons, but of facts and principles, to which I would solicit your attention. Though I shall as much as possible avoid the mention of individuals, some must unavoidably appear on the stage, because the subject of the Play is historical: but I could wish it to be considered that not the characters or the performance, but the *moral* of the Drama, should engage your notice.

Within the last twenty or thirty years, various proposals have appeared among us, for supplying the public with useful and ornamental works of Art and Literature combined; and on the whole it is no exaggeration to say, that these plans have been met with liberal encouragement. I do not say that this encouragement has been

so superabundant as to enable the proprietors of those works to amass very large fortunes, while it covered whatever mis-management has occurred, and handsomely remunerated the studies of the Artists who performed them: that might be matter of too nice calculation to be entered upon here; as might also, how far these objects should admit of compromise:—but, on the authorities of the lists of Subscribers, combined with other authorities which I believe to be good, I say that the encouragement these works have met with from the public, has been such as to warrant me in using the epithet *liberal.* Yet, it has been asserted and maintained in the first public assemblies in the kingdom, and perhaps in the world, that within the same period, the Art of Engraving has declined in this country. It is an extraordinary, and surely it is an *important* fact, that in the most commercial country of the world; and which it would be desirable to see the chief seat and seminary of the most commercial of the fine Arts; *that* Art has been declining, within a period of time, and *apparently* under circumstances,

in which it ought greatly to have improved.

If I am rightly informed, when these *effects* were stated in the House of Lords, there existed some difference of opinion as to their *causes*.—The truth is, that though the state of Engraving was regarded with a degree of interest, which bore some proportion to its national importance, the lofty station of their lordships allowed them no other than a *bird's-eye* view of the subject, and their attention was directed to spots that from a distance bore the semblance of freshness and verdure: while those who were stationed in the vale could not but perceive with regret that the fountains of public encouragement, whose streams (flowing with well intended liberality) would have been abundantly sufficient to irrigate and fertilize the fair provinces of Art, diverted from their natural channels, had formed swamps and morasses; and could not but mourn in silence that sterility should be imputed to the soil, where un-

skilfulness was due to those who had undertaken its cultivation.

In speaking of the publishers of engraved works of Art; whose want of previous education, and whose merely mercantile views, have had a most baleful influence on the art of Engraving; let me be forward to express my hope that certain respectable exceptions—men of information, liberality, conscience, and honour, will not be confounded with those who have interposed their opaque intellects between the Artists and the Public. About the time when the ill digested plans of the latter description began to be circulated, and for ten or fifteen years preceding that time, there resided in this metropolis Hogarth, Sir Robert Strange, Vivares, Woollett, Browne, Bartolozzi, Hall, Rooker, Green, Ryland, Watts, and my late, respected master (Mr. Byrne;) all exercising the profession of Engraving; and each employing himself, for the most part, according to the natural bent of his own genius, uncurbed, or but little curbed, by mercantile restraints

and ignorant dictations; and not compelled to labour against Time, who is always sure to prove victorious. With the occasional exception of Bartolozzi, and Browne, they published the best of their own works; as Raphael Morghen, and Bervic, the two most distinguished engravers of the continent, do at present; and by the strength of their united talents, they turned the tide and the profits of the European commerce for Prints, from France and Italy to England.*

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* Mr. Prince Hoare, in his "inquiry into the requisite cultivation of the Arts," after stating this fact, says "*the causes of its present decline are well worthy the investigation of the Public.*" (see p. 260.) I shall continue to think with Mr. Hoare, notwithstanding the mandate of the four managers of the Royal Institution: and so, I hope, will the Public. I own, I never was more exceedingly surprised than when I found ranged on the side of those who differ, on this point, from Mr. Hoare and myself, some of *the very persons who were invested with the power, and who had undertaken the arduous but delightful duty, of bettering the condition of Society by promoting investigation.*—When at the gate of Lyons, an officer, armed with Royal authority, demanded six livres four sous of Tristram Shandy, he tells us he had no resource left, but to say

During this distinguished period of British engraving—a period in which some of the best Engravings (both historical and landscape) that were ever performed, were produced in England—a period, therefore, at which if we should arrive in the progress of these Lectures, we may dwell with pleasure and with pride;—I say that during this period—memorable in itself, but which subsequent events of an opposite character, have contributed to raise into superior importance—there appeared in London, a man, who, with talents too slender to support a reputation as an Engraver, possessed mercantile wisdom enough, gradually to arise to opulence and the highest civic honours, chiefly by dealing in the publications of the Artists I have named. Had he continued thus to deal, it would probably have been well for Art and for the Public, and also for himself. His own fortunes would have

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something honestly worth the money. An example worth following upon such occasions; provided a man takes care not to throw the injury on the wrong side by saying too much.

arisen on the firmest foundation. The Tuscan basement, which the labours of these Artists had formed, would, in all probability, ere now have been surmounted by the noblest superstructure. But, unfortunately, not content with these honours, and emoluments, he aspired to direct and dictate the pursuits, and govern the studies, of others: and still more unfortunately for the Art under our consideration, other shopkeepers, even more ignorant than him both of the means and end of Art, were allured by his apparent success to follow his pernicious example.

I state these facts with no other reference to the past than may serve for our guidance in future: I state them in contradiction to misrepresentations, sophistically reiterated, and sedulously circulated of late: I state them from motives than which none ought to be more powerful or more sacred; —in illustration of principle, and from the firmest conviction of their truth.

The delicate plants which only the sunshine of the public countenance can foster,

began now to droop and pine in obscurity;* and, the balance of Taste being already against us, the current of trade began from that hour to turn against us also.

So far is it from being true that "the exertions of a few *commercial* individuals, but particularly "of one," have changed the British trade for prints, from an import to an export,† that good impressions of the best works of Strange, Woollett, and the rest of the Engravers I have named, are still sought with avidity by the connoisseurs of the continent; whilst the boasted speculations of those mistaken individuals and their in-

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* The degree and kind of intercourse between the Public and the Artists which would be most conducive to their mutual advantage, it is neither easy, nor perhaps necessary, here to define with exactness. The public Lectures which have lately been delivered on various Arts, afford a satisfactory earnest of one feasible means toward supplying the desideratum; and my Letter to a Member of the British Institution, which I hope will ere long be laid before the Public, will be found to contain the results of those further meditations on the subject, which I could not with propriety introduce in these Lectures, or compress into a note.

† See Boydell's "Suggestions, &c." preface and p. 9. To those who have not read Mr. Boydell's pamphlet it will

fatuated followers, (for the most part) lie unheeded upon the stalls of Leipsig and Frankfort.

The low artifices and merely mercantile views of picture-dealers, which have been so loudly and justly reprobated, are not more inimical to the real progress of the Art of Painting, than those of the print-dealers and publishers have been and are to that of engraving. To those who have directed their attention this way, the interests and the hazards of commerce have often appeared to outweigh all other regards; and the success of the publisher has been thought to include that of the artist. But, at least, let us inquire whether this be not mistaking the cause for the effect, by looking at Art and Commerce in a wrong direction.—Even confining ourselves to a commercial view of the subject, I may safely venture to assert, that the converse of this proposition would be much nearer

appear surprising that he, or that any man, should either arrogate for the *agent*, the merit that is due to the *cause*, of a given effect; or attempt to betray the public into so gross an error.

the truth: for the success of the artist, could scarcely fail, in this commercial country, to command, as it has formerly commanded, that of the merchant.

I know it is common to hear it objected to all interference with commercial speculation, that "things eventually find their own level:" so did Monsieur Garnerin, in his celebrated descent, come at last to the ground. But in all cases, to prevent dangerous oscillation would surely be no improper employment of Science: and between the aims of sterling Taste and Talent, and the preponderance of ignorant Capital, the oscillations are much more frequent, and fraught with more mischief to Art, than can easily be known at a glance, or conceived by a distant observer.

Of the vast sums which have been so vauntingly held forth to Parliament and to the Public, as having been expended on the Arts,* fairness would seem to re-

* I have forgotten how many thousand pounds Macklin was accustomed to mention as having been expended by him on the Fine Arts: but Boydell's Lottery Scheme is now

quire that we should also have been told how much had previously been obtained, through means of those arts, from the well-*meant* liberality of the public; and how little came originally from the purses of the publishers:—Yet, this has never been done.

Permit me to remind you how rarely an accomplished and impartial judge appears in any of the departments of Taste. Of the various and blended attainments of the Scholar, the Artist, and the Critic; in Literature, Painting, and Engraving; let us recollect—let us calculate—what portions should fall to the lot of him, who undertakes to conduct a connected series of historical or poetical pictures and engravings. When we have so done, and when we have reflected how very seldom a sound

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before me, which states that it has been proved, before both Houses of Parliament, that the plates from which the *Prize* prints were taken, cost upwards of 300,000l. his Pictures and Drawings 46,266l. and the Shakespear Gallery upwards of 30,000l.—It is within the knowledge of persons now living, that both Macklin and Boydell began the trade of print-selling with very inconsiderable capitals.

critic appears in any of those arts, we may be able to estimate how very few can have been competent to guide the public taste in works of this description. But knaves will hover round in ambush where profit is to be obtained; and fools rush in, where angels would tread with caution: nor can it be dissembled that the public, with the best intentions in the world, has been credulous enough to entrust such undertakings to any, and to all, who had craft and effrontery, or folly, enough to hold forth a specious advertisement or a pompous prospectus.

If a wretched bungling engraver, whose own prints should appear the strongest condemnation of his pretensions to rule and govern the studies of others; if a frame-maker, or a farrier, or any other person whose previous education had been as remote from the real objects of Art; were now to appear before us, and solicit, and seem to expect, our subscriptions to any engraving, or series of engravings, combined with poetry or history, to be gra-

dually produced under his supreme superintendence; and which he might choose to call *Sumptuous,* or *Superb,* or *National,* or *Magnificent,*—who but must laugh?—Who but would consider the pretensions of so gross a pretender, as ridiculous in themselves as those of the lamp-lighter, who, in Mr. Dibdin's song, declares himself a son of Apollo, and commissioned to enlighten the world!

Ladies and Gentlemen,—What I have faintly endeavoured to picture on your fancy, may seem a farce, in speculation: If it has been a tragedy, in reality, I could wish to engrave it on your memories. I have put a supposititious case: It is yours to perceive whether any such characters as I have portrayed, have really risen to affluence upon the studies and attainments of men, some of whom have fallen into the grave, while others have migrated to foreign* countries; and whether others again,

* The departure of Schiavonetti (one of the very best historical engravers the country contains) though not a

are not still languidly vegetating in our own, under the ample *shade* of catch-guinea lottery schemes and mercantile importance. Nor can I wish to direct your attention to such considerations, with any other view than to render the past experience, which has been dearly purchased, subservient to future benefit.

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greater discredit, will be a much greater loss, to us than the migration of Bartolozzi; on account of their respective ages. Beside which, if I am rightly informed, the former is going to France; against which country we shall soon have to contend, I hope, in the honourable rivalry of Arts and Commerce. Yet who can discommend the prudence of Schiavonetti? Europe resounds with the praises of Raphael Morghen, and the Academies of the Continent pour forth their honours at his feet: while Schiavonetti, by much his superior in taste and academical knowledge, in England is unhonoured, and scarcely better known or encouraged than the veriest painted-toy-monger, whose works decorate, or disgrace, Bond-street, or the Strand. "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still," may still be said by the merchant, and by the professors of the arts of war and politics; for their affections may still be gratified: but for an Engraver (I speak not of the mere rapid multipliers of rubbish) to say so, it now requires—notwithstanding the acknowledged liberality of our disposition to encourage foreigners—that he be born an Englishman.

To the well-intended liberality of the public much credit is due, and I believe much gratitude is felt;* and for the credulity which I have seemed to blame, I could wish to apologise. The opinion that it is laudable to promote commercial speculation, and to shelter and insure commercial hazard, is now so associated with English habits of thinking, that the slightest external stimulus is not only sufficient to excite it, but so to cloud every other view, and benumb every other feeling, that, while it prevails, we are almost ready to sink our *regard for the* HAPPINESS, in our *zeal for the* WEALTH of the Nation; or to suppose that the latter must necessarily comprise so much of the former, that he, who but proposes to en-

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* I mean by those Artists of discernment to whom the *intention* is obvious. He that would know how grateful those persons are who have really enjoyed the advantages of this liberality, should be referred to Mr. Alderman Boydell's late pamphlet; where he will find the affluent reproached (though not very intelligibly) with not having seconded the *exertions*, I suppose, of his late uncle and the print-dealers of his day. (see p. 11, and see also his preface.)

rich himself, must of course deserve our encouragement.*

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* By many it may be thought to be at the best but remotely connected with our subject, but I cannot repress here a wish that has often crossed my mind. It is, that Dr. Adam Smith, or any other philosopher of equal powers, had devoted some portion of his time and study to an investigation of the nature and causes of the HAPPINESS of nations. Under the influence of the discoveries he would have made, and the doctrines he would have inculcated, my imagination would contemplate Europe as far wiser and better than it is. In the United Kingdoms especially,—beyond which perhaps an Englishman's wishes in the present state of political events, may not wander far,—I cannot but fancy a very superior order of things. Instead of the Genius of the country being chained to the desk of office, or the counting-house, the mild but salutary influence of the fine Arts, would probably have been encouraged to co-operate more intimately, and more extensively, with the precepts of Christianity and the principles of Morals; the dawnings of British ingenuity might have been found even more *politically* desirable than the possession of a distant and uncultivated tract; and the light of its noon, and the beauty and the good,—aye, and the *Wealth* it would have disclosed, might have been allowed, even in the past and present distracted state of Europe, a much larger portion of relative national importance than has fallen to its lot. I should have been glad to have seen the effects to be fairly expected from the stimulus of mental pleasure, compared

If the prevalence of such sentiments has been sufficient to induce the Legislature liberally to grant Lottery-acts, without examining whether those who solicited such acts had so benefited the Arts, and so kept their terms with their subscribers, as to deserve them; ought we to be surprised that the public should implicitly credit the professions of the London publishers? —should cancel all consideration of how

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by such an author with those to be apprehended from the spur of painful necessity: and the lessons of benevolence and the practical wisdom to be deduced from the operations of Art on the realities of Nature; and the feelings and the reasonings to which these give birth; balanced against and finally blended with the effects of the artful arrangement of general terms, and the prevailing system of political maxims drawn from the mingled errors and experience of departed times: the penetration, perspicuity, comprehension of mind, and simplicity of developement which such an one must possess, could scarcely have failed to render as clear to the calculating head as to the philanthropic heart, whether the body of Art should be animated by a soul of Avarice, or by that pure spirit of Social Happiness which Poets invoke and Patriots adore. The superficial, and perhaps the profound, reader, must pardon the appearance of this Utopian reverie.

far it was likely, or even possible, that such characters could be qualified to conduct such works as they had undertaken?—should suffer itself to believe that publications, whose imperfections are numerous and palpable, were the best the Arts of the country could produce?—and should even seem to be influenced by a notion, that by some magical touch of Pall-mall, Bond-street, or other popular situation in the metropolis, Ignorance must start into Knowledge, and vulgar appetite be suddenly converted to exquisite Taste.

[This is the Lecture, and the pages the reader has just passed, the particular part of the Lecture, for which the managers *thought it right* (if the word thought may here be used without impropriety) to dismiss me from my Lectureship at the Royal Institution:—A dismissal, which, however seriously it may in some respects have been felt, is a much less evil to my sense of Honour and Right, than would have been the suppression of the truths which I believe the Lecture to contain; and which I have reason to hope those who took on themselves my dismissal would have perceived it to contain; had they heard it delivered in the Lecture-room, or in their own Committee-room; where I offered to repeat either the whole or the questionable passages:—Like the Dutch sailor who broke his leg by a fall from the main-mast, and whose philosophy is commended in the Spectator,

I have now to thank God, that neither my head nor my heart is broken by *my* fall.——When questioned before the Board of Management, I did not—it was impossible that I should, affect to conceal that certain allusions contained in this Lecture were meant to be applied to the late Mr. Boydell.—I frankly avowed that I wished and intended they should be so understood. If that Alderman and *Engraver*, had been the subject of my discourse, as he might have been without the smallest impropriety (for there is no reason why he might not turn out as useful a subject to me, as Gray or Dr. Johnson to the Rev. Mr. Crowe, or any *deceased* Musician to Dr. Crotch) I might perhaps have sought, and perhaps have found, some acts of his that would bear to be nearly inspected, and might still be deemed acts of Generosity, and examples worthy to be followed: but the Alderman and *Merchant* fell under my notice; and only as far as respected the profession of Engraving. The consequences of limiting the exertions of others in that Art by his own narrow ideas of its perfectibility; the policy or impolicy of sacrificing the future hopes of an Art, to (Opulence) the present deity of Commerce; the wisdom or folly of preferring pecuniary *Goodness*, to moral riches, were the important principles before me: and from them it was incumbent on me not to divert the attention of my audience.

The latter part of the succeeding Lecture, would have consisted of a portion of my analytical inquiry into the elementary principles of Engraving; and the former part would have been devoted to a consideration of the means which have been resorted to for its cultivation. It is a mortifying circumstance, that sordid intrigues, or unworthy and ill-founded fears, by prevent-

ing this Discourse* from being delivered, should have obliged me to suppress the progress which I had made in the analytical inquiry: but in no part of the course, had I depended so much on the examples and illustrations which I meant to have exhibited at the time of reading. They are indispensable to a clear understanding of the subject. I am therefore compelled by these machinations, to omit that which of all I had to deliver, I conceive would have been most useful to my audience. I now proceed with what has not yet been publicly read; which, for the sake of producing a more connected arrangement, has been formed into the second division of this Discourse. I have availed myself of the interval of time which has elapsed, to revise the whole: in doing which, I have in this, as in other places, added some few touches which would not have appeared in the Lecture-room, and by which, I hope, the general effect will be improved.]

HAVING admitted the charges of deterioration which have been brought against modern English engraving, when its actual present state is compared with the state in which an impartial and dispassionate ob-

* The syllabus of my succeeding Lecture, which began with the words "Further explanation of the causes that have retarded the advancement of Engraving," had been sent for, and delivered to the acting Secretary, to be inserted in the weekly advertisement, before my examination (if it were proper to call it so) took place. If it struck unfounded terrors—*I am sorry for it.* The Boydells (I use this word as the denomination of a species) will now see that they had nothing to fear from that Lecture.

server would have had a right to expect to have found it after a transplantation to this country of half a century; and having ascribed this deficiency in part to the baleful influence which unqualified persons have assumed and exercised, in ignorantly dictating to the studies, and curbing the energies, of its professors; I have now to submit that another cause, not less potent in its operation, has contributed to the present regretted state of Engraving. But I hope also to make it appear that such have been the exertions of its professors, under disadvantages which I trust I shall be able to manifest, that you will in conclusion think with me, that (like Sterne's reduced Marquis) the Art has "fought up against its condition with great firmness;" and is now in a better state than the country had a right, under its past and present privations and discouragements, to expect.

The fate of English engraving has been that of the English language; of which Dr. Johnson so eloquently complains. "Employed in the cultivation of every other art,

it has itself been hitherto neglected; suffered to spread under the direction of chance, into wild exuberance; resigned to the tyranny of Time and Fashion; and exposed to the corruptions of Ignorance, and the caprices of Innovation. It has been treated not as the pupil, but the slave, of Science;—the Pioneer of Art, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths through which Painting and Architecture press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress."

That no efficient endeavours have yet been made to ascertain, develope, and promulgate, the elementary principles of Engraving; that criticism and practical skill in this Art have hence been left to wander, without light and without roads, in wild uncertainty; and that the Honours of an Academy expressly instituted for the promotion of the Arts, have been denied to those who might most distinguish themselves in this arduous study; has justly excited the surprise of foreigners, and the re-

gret of those persons amongst ourselves who knew the intrinsic value of the Art, and who perceived that the Painters of Great Britain were destined to derive encouragement at home, and could only enjoy reputation abroad, in proportion as Engraving was critically understood, and successfully cultivated.

Mr. Burke has delicately apologised for the seeming remissness on this point of the engravers themselves, by stating of artists in general, that they are too constantly and busily engaged in the practice, to attempt to explain to the public the theories, of their respective professions:—and from the dealers in Engravings, for reasons already stated, such an attempt was hardly to be expected. But when a Royal Academy was established in London, expressly for the cultivation of the fine Arts,—surely then, both the public and the professors of this Art, had every rational ground to hope —nay, to expect, that some steps would have been taken toward the accomplishment of purposes so desirable.

Whatever hopes,—whatever rational expectations might then have been formed, were disappointed by the appearance of the Academical Code. *Professors* of Painting, Architecture, Anatomy, Perspective, ancient Literature, and foreign correspondence, were thereby appointed "to lead the students into the readiest and most efficacious paths of study;" with a limited admission of the public to the Lectures, which were ordered to be delivered on Art: but provision was made for no Professor of the Statuary's art; no Professor of Landscape; and none of Engraving. Further to discourage—I am compelled to use this word—further to *dis*courage this latter Art, it was ordained that Engravers, however great their professional merits, should not be eligible to the higher honours of the Royal Academy. By a strange infatuation, which only witchcraft or fool-craft could effect, and of which the spell is not yet broken, the impulse which acts most forcibly on ingenuous and well constituted minds—that honourable estimation which is at once the noblest reward of existing merit, and the

most powerful spring of future exertion,* —was withheld even from those who might

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* In an oration made in the Parliament which has recently been dissolved, on a great public question, the following passage occurs; the reasoning of which I consider, upon strict analogy, to be applicable to the present state of those who profess the Art of Engraving. I do not vouch for its being a correct extract from the speech of the noble Lord who is said to have delivered it—I take it from a news-paper report.

Speaking of the Catholics of Ireland, Lord Grenville is reported to have said, "Have your Lordships well weighed the consequences that must flow from the operation of such attempts to degrade and dispirit the minds of *any* class of men? Have you studied the difference of conduct under which men act, who have high rewards and distinctions set before them to influence their ambition and animate their labours? How different would the views and the spirit of a student of the Law be, if he could entertain no hope of ever reaching the high distinction now enjoyed by the Noble Lord on the woolsack? Does not much of his estimation of himself, and of the honour he attaches to his profession, arise from that single consideration? Suppose for a moment, that the Students of Lincoln's-Inn, and of the Middle Temple exclusively, possessed this great and animating prospect, and that those of the Inner Temple, were debarred from ever entertaining such proud pretensions. Will your Lordships bring yourselves to believe that all three can devote themselves with equal spirit and ardour to

most excel * in the Art of Engraving: and the Academy in Europe which should

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their professional pursuits? Must not the Members of the Inner Temple feel themselves comparatively low and insignificant, whenever they reflect on the comparative insignificance of the objects to which they are allowed to aspire?

If in the Army a similar dispiriting distinction was to be made between two regiments; if the Officers of the one were never to be raised above the rank of Colonels, while the Officers of the other might aspire to be Generals and great Commanders; how different must be the feelings and the spirit by which they must be actuated: They cannot feel themselves, or be looked upon, as the same race of beings. Apply my Lords, all the effects of such disparagement; compare the sentiments of such men with the sentiments of those whose views and ambition are checked by no such restraints, whose prospects are clouded by no such marks of inferiority: Your own breasts must tell you what works within theirs. The sentiments that must be engendered by such invidious distinctions and preferences may easily be conceived: They must irritate the pride, and fret the feelings of every honourable, high, and aspiring, mind: —and what evil consequences must proceed from such degrading distinctions, may more easily be imagined than expressed.

* The admission of the four most distinguished Engravers to the rank of Royal Academician, I should conceive would have been sufficient for every purpose of laud-

most have honoured that Art, has been from that hour the Academy in Europe where it is most neglected.

In other words, at that eventful crisis of commercial advantage and public happiness, the establishment of a National Academy, it was in this country virtually enacted that none but mercenary and ignoble minds should be devoted to an Art, the successful study of which was fated to form the basis of British encouragement to the higher efforts of Painting:—an Art which, when its immediate and remote consequences are taken into consideration, must be regarded as capable of influencing, to no inconsiderable degree, the general commercial prosperity of England; and which is almost the sole, but

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able emulation. It would have conferred on Engraving a degree of relative honour and importance to Art in the aggregate, as 4 to 40, (which I presume to think not unreasonable:) and, with the addition of a *Professor* of Engraving, would have placed that Art, with respect to Academical cultivation, on a level with Architecture; of which profession there are four Royal Academicians.

certainly the most efficient, means of diffusing through the world a just and general taste for the arts of Design.

Now, no art is ever likely to attain such a degree of perfection as to operate the improvement of the public Taste, or any considerable amendment of its morals, where it is exercised for a recompense merely mercenary. In a commercial country, more especially, where wealth has usurped the title of *Goodness,* we should rather increase the weight in the scale of Honour, to counterpoise and check that sordid propensity, whose preponderance must else bring down the arts of refinement to the condition of mere handicraft trades,—and their professors to the condition of those who toil at the lower employments of life, and are driven by the fear of evil, rather than attracted by the prospect of good. For we should not forget, that man is prone to temptation. The artist who cannot obtain honour, will of course, or must of necessity, aim at profit: and under such circumstances, to follow, to flatter, and to

corrupt, the public Taste, is easily seen to be a more certain, and much more ready, way to wealth, than to acquire and exercise the power to lead, exalt, and refine it. The sure way, therefore, to degrade any *Art;* to break down its pretensions to that honourable denomination; and to annihilate the benefits that, *as* an art, it is capable of imparting to Society; would be to ordain or contrive that it should be exercised for money, and for *no higher* reward.*

A well known witticism of the late Hon. Charles Townshend, may help to illustrate these principles—if indeed, their truth be not of itself, sufficiently evident. Some thirty or forty years ago, there existed in London a debating Society, which, from

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* It is painful, but is sometimes necessary, to trace the operations of unworthiness. The process by which what was once regarded as a fine Art, is gradually converted to a common trade, is this. The public taste will rest satisfied with inferior degrees of excellence in a living Art, where higher degrees are not produced. If the Garricks have quitted, or can be kept from, the stage, inferior actors will

the house where its meetings were held, was called the Robin Hood Society. Hear-

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find reputation. To satisfy the existing Taste, or to debase it that it may be the more cheaply and easily satisfied, is the aim of the manager or dealer; who, at the best, cannot aim to raise it above the level of his own. Meanwhile it has become the ultimate object of the Artist, (a stranger to his own reputation but through this corrupt medium—feeling no more of the cheering influence of the sun-shine of the public countenance than the dealer may find it his interest to transmit,) to accommodate his talents to his employer's wishes, and the prices that he is content to pay. These causes being once put in action, the Art is necessarily retrograde. How much of Novelty, combined with how little of intrinsic merit, will (in Mr. Boydell's phrase) "answer to the publisher," is sooner or latter ascertained; and the results of the studies of the Artists of the first generation, becoming rudimental to the next, manual, soon takes place of mental, industry. The excellence which has resulted from mental feeling being banished, what can be learned of Art in the trammels of imitation is all that remains. To increase the quantity, not to raise the quality, of its productions, is now the way to wealth; and the Artist, if he might still be called so—the practitioner, is induced to take numerous pupils or apprentices to multiply the number of his productions; and when the public is content to receive with approbation such art as any one can teach, and as every one might learn, the process is complete.

ing it asserted that, when Jeacock the baker was President, there was better speaking at the Robin Hood than in St. Stephen's Chapel, Mr. Townshend replied, "You are not to wonder that people should go to the *Baker* for oratory, when they come to the House of Commons for *Bread.*"—In like manner I do not hesitate to say, that you must look elsewhere for excellence than in a country where the professors of a given Art, are doomed to exercise that Art for *nothing but* bread: Neither oratory nor imitative Art, under such circumstances can be more than the paralised, inefficient, representative—the shadowy semblance, of what it would have been under a more auspicious dispensation of things.

Where nothing better than money is the prize, none better than mercenary candidates will start in the race: and, what steady perseverance in arduous study; what noble flights of virtuous enthusiasm; what disinterested or patriotic employment of exalted talent; ought to have been expected under such an order of things, might have been seen in the purlieus of Duke's

Place, or read in the History of Man, without making this great metropolis the theatre of deleterious experiment; and should therefore have been well known to those who undertook to legislate for an Academy of Arts.

On this point, and with the examples of the Academies of Rome, Paris, Vienna, Petersburg, and I believe all the public Academies of Europe, (our own excepted) on my side the question, I may surely be allowed to differ from the *Architect* of those laws; I may even venture to deny that his basement is of adequate breadth, or his foundation sufficiently firm.

Helvetius has remarked the propensity by which most men are impelled to undervalue those attainments of others, of whose nature, and the extent of whose uses, they are ignorant: He has also noted how frequently individuals are disposed to identify excellence itself, with the kind of excellence which each flatters himself that he possesses.*

* These are positions so uneasy, that we can scarcely

Hence, the present knowledge of some (I am afraid I might say of most) persons, and their own estimates of their own powers, are made too much the measure of the possible exertions of others. We are apt to listen to accounts of such exertions with a degree of uncertainty which inclines us to limit them by what we already know; and generally to expect that they will turn out less than we imagine ourselves to be capable of. It is upon this principle that the poets have ventured Ajax, who was not celebrated for the brightness of his intellects, as braving Jove himself! though he stood in awe of Achilles:* He had witnessed the impetuous valour of Achilles, but was unable to comprehend the omni-

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think them natural, while we are almost ready to confirm their truth by hating Helvetius for the discovery.

* I have taken this remark on the character of Ajax, from Rousseau, though I confess, I do not know, and cannot find, the particular passages on which it is founded. Probably the sublime remonstrance of this Hero in the XVII. Book of the Iliad, may be one.

potence of Jove: and it is on this principle, and perhaps from no engraver having been present, to assert the intellectuality and public utility of his profession, when the laws of the London Academy were framed, that while Architecture is there placed on a level with the painter's Art, and above that of the Statuary, engraving has been stamped with invidious and degrading inferiority.

Now, if there be any class of men, whom we should hope to find superior to—whom we should naturally expect would have raised themselves above, this ordinary condition of human nature, surely it would be those whose study, whose duty, and whose pleasure it is, to better and improve that condition—the first professors of the arts of civilization and refinement. From every professor of the Fine Arts, we have a reasonable right to expect the sentiments and feelings of a large and liberal mind; and a contrary principle of conduct, was as foreign and unfit in those who undertook

to legislate for an Academy of Arts, as it would be in this place. How would it sound here, if a Painter, a Statuary, or an Architect, (or an Artist of any other description) were to present himself before you, and say, either directly or by implication,—" Ladies and Gentlemen—attend alone to the Art which *I* have the honour to profess, for all other arts are unworthy of your notice."—We rather expect that such a person will address you in some such language as the following: " I am happy to have it in my power to anticipate that you are well informed of other Arts and Sciences, because your minds are thereby duly prepared to receive the information it is my duty to impart: My task is on this account less difficult and more delightful: The more you know of other arts, the more easily you will acquire a knowledge of mine also; nor have I any reason to fear that when you *have* acquired this knowledge, you will love it the less. Like St. Paul at Ephesus, I find an altar already raised to the *unknown* Art; and

have only to wish that, like him, I might be empowered to declare unto you a new object of devotion."

Such is the tone of sentiment, that, upon all occasions, we should naturally expect from an artist; and from artists selected for the purpose, and invested with the power, of legislating for the general advantage of the Arts, we had an equal right to expect a corresponding clearness and comprehension of judgment; profound knowledge of causes and effects; familiar acquaintance with at least such past events as were connected with the progressive improvement of Art, and the benign influence of Art upon the progress of Society; combined with penetration to see into remote consequences, and energy to trace the necessary, and secure the probable, connexion between the past, the present, and the future. In a country—a commercial country, where the opulent were numerous and the tasteful but few, the legislator for the Arts should have foreseen whether early encouragement to the higher efforts

in painting was to be expected, mediately or immediately, from the wealthy and the great; or from the public at large: he should have known whether the engraver's art, was in itself useful and praiseworthy, or worthless or contemptible; and in either case, whether it was not likely in the surrounding state of things to become the principal means of early encouragement to Painting. How these means could be rendered most efficient? would have become a necessary subsequent consideration: and in the presence of legislators warmed by a zeal so honest, and capable of entertaining sentiments and views thus liberal and extensive,—Engraving might have boldly stood up and said with Banquo,

——————— my noble partner,*
You greet with present grace, and great prediction
Of noble having and of Royal hope;
That he seems rapt withal—to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of Time,
And say *which grain will grow*, and which will not,
Speak then to *me*.————

* The Macbeth of British art, was bewitched, I believe, by Reynolds—and Barry; Sir William Chambers acting as Hecate. Less than the influence of Hecate could not

It has been said that, with the view of excluding Sir Robert Strange from our Academy, the Art of Engraving was altogether excluded from participating in its benefits: but the obvious injustice of so palpable a departure from principle, and the shame which would have attended it, unites with the other omissions, and with the general complexion of the Academic laws,* to persuade us that this omission rather originated in the narrowness of the views of

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have effected a preference so manifestly unfair and impolitic as our academical establishment exhibits, of Architecture over the arts of the Statuary and Engraver. I would, however, cheerfully have forgiven Sir William for presuming that Great-Britain would have numerous palaces to erect, if he had done her the justice to expect also, that she would have Kings, and Statesmen, and Heroes, to honour.

* See the printed abstract of the Institution and Laws of the Royal Academy of Arts; and see also a pamphlet printed for Stockdale, 1804, entitled "a Concise Vindication of the conduct of the five suspended Members of the Council of the Royal Academy;" and another published by Longman, Cadell, and Miller, entitled "a Concise Review of the Concise Vindication of the conduct, &c. &c.;" wherein some of these mischievous errors are sufficiently manifest.

its legislators; amongst whom all the crooked littlenesses—all the selfish, short-sighted, temporary, expediency of politics, appear to have taken place of the simplicity of motive, and amplitude of principle, of legislation:—of legislation, not for the punishment of crime, but which should have comprehended the generation and reward of unborn and immeasurable merit!

In delivering these sentiments of the errors and omissions of the laws and legislators of the Royal Academy, I am very far from imputing those errors to its present members. It is possible that ignorance, or mistaken superciliousness, may place an art, as it placed Sampson of old, in a situation where the exertion of blinded strength can only be destructive. If the present situation of British engraving should at all resemble this, it would be unjust that either the mischief or the blame should fall on those who neither blinded the art nor placed it in the portal.

One of the present members of the Aca-

demy—the highly favoured votary of every Muse, has recently united the purest charms of poetic persuasion with the most resistless powers of reasoning, to impress us with the important truth, that *no Art has ever flourished, or ever can flourish as an Art, in any country, unless in that country it be* HONOURED *as an Art—unless it be cherished and respected as a mode of refined mental operation.* The same sentiments have been promulgated from this place in language not less forcible by another of its members: and that *the cultivation of public Taste can alone give vigour to living Art,* has lately been enforced with appropriate energy in the Lecture-room of the Royal Academy itself, both from the chair of the Professor, and from that of the President. Indeed, no tasteful or cultivated mind has been found to deny, that upon these delicate and dulcet chords all the music of all the Arts must be sounded; and from such men, placed at the head of the Arts, I am willing to anticipate every just and early extension of their good offices toward the Art under our consideration. My inten-

tion has been, not to cast on them the faintest shade of unmerited blame, but, to apologise for the present regretted state of Engraving, by accounting for a deficiency which has not been disputed; to shield it from the shafts which have ungenerously been levelled at its very existence *as an Art;* and to vindicate, and as far as the efforts of an humble individual may conduce, to re-establish and perpetuate, its claims to that honourable denomination.

But a doctrine which at a cursory view seems to rise directly counter to these opinions, and which I believe originated with Voltaire, has lately *re*-presented itself to our notice. It amounts to an affirmation that great or useful discoveries in Art or Science, are never made by Academies, Colleges, or similar aggregated bodies of Artists, or men of Science; and that the inculcation of *System* at such public Institutions, has a constant tendency to produce more harm than good.

To deem Academies useless, or worse

than useless, because great discoveries always originate with individuals, is to draw a false inference from a self-evident truth. Discoveries in Art and Science must originate with individuals. It cannot in the nature of things be otherwise. In the Universe of Art, individual genius is the projectile force. Academies, therefore, should not be blamed for not performing what it is not the proper office or duty of Academies to perform.

But the question of what is,—or what ought to be, termed an Academy? should previously have been stated. Now as an Academy, collectively speaking, is not a discoverer, so neither is it a school: (though it may very properly include a school.)—It is rather a *Parliament* * of Art. It differs from, and is superior to, an ordinary school, in respect that it is less a place to instruct novices in what is known and practised, and more a place for men of distinguished

* I conceive this word to be French, and its genuine English definition to be free and unrestrained oral discussion.

abilities to confer in, and communicate their lights and discoveries to each other, for their mutual benefit and the general improvement of Art. Such were those groves of immortal memory from whence we derive the term, and which once adorned the banks of the Ilyssus; and such might now illuminate the borders of the Thames,—or perhaps the boundaries of the earth!—for we are not deficient in Artists of high attainment; but in wise, effective, and comprehensive, Academical Laws.

If liberal communication and interchange of sentiment and opinion, be the beneficial things they are allowed to be upon the large scale of Society, they should surely be still more beneficial on the smaller scale of an Academy; where the parties are more select, their sympathies more accordant, and their intercourse more complete.

That I have the misfortune, on the question of the value or uselessness of Academies and System, to differ from an author of senatorial rank, and of still higher rank

in the estimation of the tasteful and judicious, I cannot be certain. We may seem to differ in words, while in fact we may really agree. If he writes against Academies as they generally have existed, or do exist, he admits the possibility—he even contends for the practice—(though without specifying the most eligible means) of cultivating imagination and judgment together: and if he writes against System, and by system means consistency of co-operative principles, his own "analytical inquiry," might be pleaded (if such an argument might be esteemed fair in such a discussion) in refutation of such doctrine.—At least he will allow that analytical research *should* extend to the whole of the subject treated; and that the object of the separate ascertainment of elementary principles, is synthetic and systematic combination.

You will permit me now to recur to what I before stated, namely, that to discover new principles in Art must ever be the fortune or merit of individuals; and

that the energies of Genius (always the offspring of single minds) are, collectively speaking, the centrifugal force by which the great system of the Universe of Art is continued in motion. As Providence has appointed a centripetal power (not to *destroy,* but) to restrain the centrifugal; so in Art (and I suspect also in morals) the redundancy of impetus—the eccentricities and excesses of individual energy—are sympathetically restrained, and rendered subservient to its progress through time and space: and perhaps by no power that human wisdom has yet devised, could this purpose be in any country more effectually accomplished, than by instituting an Academy of Arts upon expansive principles—or which should "grow with *its* growth, and strengthen with its strength."

A very principal object, then, of such public Institutions (if my opinion be right) is to detect and check the mischievous tendency of unprincipled Novelty; to discourage the meretricious fallacies of mistaken or empirical pretenders to art and

criticism; and, either by their productions in Art; or by public Lectures; or public discussions of principles as they might apply to, or be drawn from, the works of distinguished masters; *—or by all of these and by every other honourable and efficient means, to ascertain, recognise, sanction, and promulgate, such discoveries of sound principle, as may be made by individual artists and critics. Of so much importance does this object appear; and so vitally essential to the ends and purposes of such Institutions; that, unless it be accomplished, I fear an Academy can be little more in any country than a mercantile body; a drawing school; or a benefit society; or a mere feather in the cap of royal vanity or national folly.—It may be a nursery of Saplings; but can never be the

* I am informed that public discussions of the merits and demerits of celebrated Pictures was once common, and that the Discourses published by Felibien, are really such as took place, in the French Academy: and we know from History that the ancients entertained an high opinion of this mode of instruction.

forest of Oaks, with which a country that aspires to greatness, should be strengthened and adorned.

Had such an Academy of Arts, including that of Engraving, existed in Germany or the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, the bright but erratic course of Henry Goltzius, (which we shall hereafter have occasion to notice) might have been restrained by salutary attraction: He might have shed a steadier light and rolled a fair planet in the Universe of Art. The principles which governed his various practice, and the discoveries to which that practice in its turn gave birth—communicated to his contemporaries, and regulated by the general feeling and judgment of the great body of Artists,—would have really and highly enriched his art, and the most valuable rudimental knowledge would have been transmitted to his successors.

I have chosen the example of Henry Goltzius, because among engravers he is a conspicuous figure; one whose genius is

admired, and whose eccentricities are now notorious: but so unsettled have always been the principles of Engraving, that observations similar to these in principle might be applied to almost every engraver of distinguished talent; from the time of Martin Schön and Andrea Mantegna, down to our own.

It is curious—but it deserves our attention upon a much nobler principle than the gratification of curiosity—to look through history, and observe the general slow progress, and the occasional vigorous and rapid advancement, of Art and Science. As long as in such pursuits men are governed by temporary expedients arising out of, and falling into, particular occasions;—as long as their attention is confined to detached phenomena; their progress is necessarily slow, if they can be said to proceed at all: but I believe that whenever rapid advances in Science, or in the general practice of any Art, have taken place, such advances have resulted from the ascertainment and promulgation of its radical or first principles;

and the vigorous exertions which vivid feeling, supported by, and relying upon, these, is enabled to make.* Need I expatiate on the relative value of expediency and principle? Need I say that they differ as widely as cunning from wisdom; as intricacy and littleness from simplicity and breadth; as the narrow and intricate ways of a politician, from the noble and expanded views of a legislator? Or shall I request you, in confirmation of these truths, to compare the advancement of the Sciences, those of Chemistry and natural Philosophy in particular, within the last two centuries, with their progress during the whole former history of the World.

The ascertainment, then, of what ought

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* Works of the Arts and Literature of former and more refined periods, have frequently fallen under our notice in the course of these Lectures. In the estimation of the philosophical Artist, the intrinsic value even of these, sublime monuments of human intellect, can be rated no higher than as the Principles on which they were produced may be traced in the examples. In no other view are they conducive to our further progress.

to be esteemed Principle, is, in every Art, of the very highest importance. If we embark in that of Engraving, either as professors or collectors, without it,—we may carry sail indeed; but we traverse an ocean of uncertainty, without light, without rudder, without compass, or polar star; and are only right by occasional good fortune. With principle for our guide, we proceed regularly in our conquests over error and barbarism, with the superior discipline and steady bravery of a Roman legion; possessing, and securing, and cultivating, the ground we have gained.

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